



PUNCH

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IT is understood that the man fined last week for littering the shore of Windermere with five cartons, two dog-biscuit packets, twenty-four food tins, a wooden crate, egg shells, a wine bottle, soap wrappers, crockery, cooking utensils, a dishcloth, stale food and a quantity of rope has been made an offer by several still-life academicians.

CHARIVARIA

RUSH-HOUR crowds jammed in the Tube last week discussed Sir John Elliot's hope "that some of the traffic that has gone to the Underground will stay there." The majority opinion was that this seemed highly likely.

"A BULLET CLIPS MY HAIR IN TRIPOLI"
Daily Mail reporter
Any *Express* men about?

PERISHING food had to be dumped overboard last week because of the unofficial dock strike. Similar action has not so far been taken with the perishing dockers.

LORD HAILSHAM's attack on those who "poke fun at our parliamentary democracy or ridicule our political



leaders" suggests that he has finished with all that bell-ringing, loud-hailing, public milk-drinking and auctioning of swimming trunks.

AN OFFICIAL of the Household Brigade Polo Club told reporters that the Duke

of Edinburgh's appearances on the polo ground may make it necessary "to widen the public enclosure" this year.

Correspondingly, the Lord's Day Observance Society will

be throwing out an annexe.

A PENDULUM swung sharply in the advertisement columns the other day when a British West African company



appealed for young men of African nationality willing to "take employment in their home country."

THAT General de Gaulle should have surrendered his monopoly of the headlines to Alfred George Hinds overnight was less remarkable than it seemed. It was Hinds's third escape in two and a half years: the General had taken twelve to break out at all.

FISH and chips, says a B.M.A. report, are "at least as good as lobster thermidor." But they give nothing like the same flavour to an expenses sheet.

THE GOVERNMENT was sensible to refuse an inquiry into diplomatic immunity. So many useful witnesses would have claimed it.

Bishop Heber Please Note

What though a nasty breeze now
Blows harsh o'er Ceylon's isle?
Each islander agrees now
That half the rest are vile.



Punch Diary

ONE cannot, of course, condone the French action in locking up the "Panorama" team in a cage. The use of cages is far from chic, and if you are going to choose B.B.C. personalities for this purpose why not somebody more suitable, like David Attenborough? Richard Dimbleby would need, I imagine, something specially adapted to the fuller figure. Pushing a microphone at people and inviting them to comment or confess is no worse than asking questions and putting down the answers in shorthand. Indeed it is rather better because many people are thrilled to get their pictures on television. Woodrow Wyatt often asks passers-by such deep questions as "Are you happy?" I suppose the argument is that when a nation is worried it is a bit heartless for foreigners to treat it merely as an interesting spectacle, and also, I think, there is still a feeling that reporting in sight and sound is less dignified than reporting in print. It certainly clutters the streets up more.

Physics and Politics

THE Liberal Agent at Ealing South some days ago was reporting "very good latent interest in the constituency." Miss Stephenson's phrase suggests a new stage in the Liberal campaign to make the electoral system produce results that express the will of the electors more precisely. Latent Heat is the point at which the non-physicist is most clearly divided from the physicist, as any physicist would agree who has tried to explain to an Arts man how heat can be pumped out of rivers into buildings. Politicians may find the same difficulty in explaining Latent Interest. I suppose it is equally

capable of being transferred. When reform comes, the apathetic and the "Don't knows" will have their Liberalism somehow made available for voters who make patent and practical use of it. Perhaps any vote for a Liberal candidate might count as three.

"... For Idle Hands to do"

IF not getting much in the way of wages, bus strikers have been winning the struggle for inclusion in the Corps Diplomatique and Reigning Sovereign status as being above the law. Thus a Marylebone magistrate said "I have not the heart to send you to prison" to a busman who stole cheese and sausages, and a Marlborough Street magistrate, discharging a conductress who pleaded guilty to soliciting in Hyde Park, said "I can understand the difficulties of your position but I wish you would not go on doing this." Some nice points for jurists arise. While strikers patently enjoy unqualified privilege in such petty misdemeanours as chimney on fire and cycling on the footpath, technical objections might obstruct their defence at the other end of the scale in cases of murder in the capital degree, garrotting, and possibly blackmail. But there is a touchy borderline range of midway offences, indictable and non-indictable, including grievous bodily harm, loitering with intent and in possession of housebreaking imple-

ments by night, where case law is scarce or non-existent and the principle of public equity almost void for remoteness. In civil suits, of course, all enlightened liberal juridical opinion will award the striker complete indemnity for jactitation of marriage or champerty, because clearly a flopping striker's morale could be sensibly stiffened by the right to boast about a fictitious wedding to a glamorous blonde or to promote a row between two other chaps.

Highest Authority

COUNCILLOR BRODDLE of Cleethorpes, placed the Queen in a difficult position by writing to ask if his suit would do for the forthcoming royal visit. He must have known that only one answer was possible from the headquarters of a democracy. Moreover, the highly liberal tone of the Palace reply—"The Queen never stipulates the colour of clothes to be worn"—could well encourage all manner of sartorial licence among the municipal reception committee. Councillors who had planned to wash and change before shaking hands may now come straight from their place of business in overalls or even braces. Others will wear plus-fours. Brown boots will jut from beneath the mayoral robes. The Town Clerk will keep his hat on. I quite understand that Mr. Broddle wanted a crushing rejoinder to "the immediate past Mayor," who had told him that, unless better dressed, he would be "excluded from the presentation," but he should have fought his own battles. When Her Majesty's staff are working day and night on the details of a visit to Cleethorpes they have their hands full.

No Pride

IT was Mr. Tommy Steele, I believe, who was recently "insulted" by an offer of £2,000 a week. Now a spokesman for the Amalgamated Union of Foundry Workers has said that their last wage award "was the most humiliating they had ever received." The time seems ripe for someone to get out a glossary of pejoratives suitable to emoluments of all kinds. In the meantime, speaking for those whose incomes are not drawn upwards by the cost of living, I appeal for insults, humiliations, affronts, outrages and scurrilities to the point where financial vituperation dies from sheer exhaustion.



"Okay for a group of French M.P.s on holiday, Sarge!"

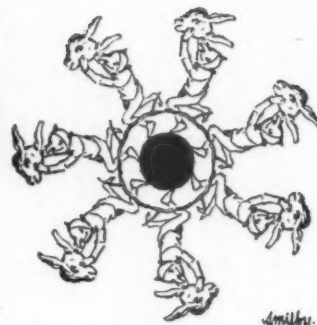




In the Eighties
S. L. BENSUSAN
recalls in an interview:

Seven Ages of Humour

THE EMPIRE AND THE ESSEX MARSHLANDS



WHEN you get to my age—and I am eighty-six next birthday—you can look back on an England very different from the England of to-day. London especially is changed out of all recognition from the place I remember in the early 'nineties when I was young.

My recollections of those days seem to centre largely about the old Empire music-hall in Leicester Square. I was what Zangwill called *persona gratis* at the Empire—I was very friendly with the management and came and went much as I liked. It had a reputation for being rather "fast," and indeed the lounge was a meeting-place for the more high-class ladies of the town, but to my way of thinking it was far more decent a place than many a night-club is to-day. However, that didn't save it from the attentions of the moralists, and a lady called Mrs. Ormiston Chant appealed to the L.C.C. and got it closed.

In place of the Lounge the Empire management put up something called the Moorish Bar, but this didn't suit the bright boys of London at all. They regarded it as an infringement of their liberties; and one evening a whole lot of them came and tore the new place to bits.

I was there at the time, talking with Hector Tennent, a director, and I can see these chaps now, tearing down the woodwork and smashing everything they could get at. I remember a young sandy-headed fellow running past me with an enormous balk of timber on his shoulder that he'd pulled up somewhere, shouting at the top of his voice. "Do you know who that is?" the director said. "That's Randolph Churchill's boy Winston. He's pretty lively, isn't he."

My first essay in journalism was a monthly, *The Bohemian*, which I founded and edited for a year, at the end of which

it died of a defect in the circulation. I had some pretty distinguished contributors—Phil May, for instance, and Raven Hill, and Walter Emanuel, who started "Charivaria" in *Punch*. Emanuel was one of the kindest and cleverest of men; in fact when I look back at those days I remember little but kindness and charm among my contemporaries. I suppose I could remember unpleasant people if I tried; but if there's no pleasure in remembering them, why do it?

Edgar Wallace was another very charming man, good-natured and sympathetic, but with a deplorable taste in waistcoats. He used to turn out journalism by the yard, and he made a lot of money with it; but it all went on the horses.

Of course "a lot of money" then seems very little by the standards of to-day. Max Beerbohm used to contribute a full page drawing to *Pick-me-Up* and get paid two guineas for it; but money went a lot further in those days.

Freelances at that time lived mostly in, and on, Soho. I never got more than two guineas for an article, not often as much as that; but for one-and-sixpence I could go to the Café d'Italie and have a table d'hôte lunch which to my mind was the most marvellous in London, if not in Europe. For your one-and-six you got *hors d'œuvres*, then soup or fish, followed by an entrée—meat of some kind with vegetables, all quite first class—then cheese, and finally dessert. Add threepence for a cup of coffee and threepence for a tip, and you had a truly wonderful two-shillingworth.

I was sharing rooms in Piccadilly Mansions, off Piccadilly Circus, with an old schoolfellow. We shared an excellent valet called Smith, who subsequently died from eating bad oysters. He brought us our breakfast in the morning;

we would wait until the very last moment, just before three, to go for our lunch; and that was really all we needed to eat for the day.

Not that the Café d'Italie was a philanthropic institution; indeed the proprietors made enough money to go back to Italy, and one of them, I heard, became mayor of his town. The secret was twofold. In the first place, both the marketing and the kitchen management were done with great skill and attention. In the second place, dinner was two-and-six, and was not so full a meal as lunch. By serving two hundred lunches it was possible to carry on financially while building up a great store of goodwill; and the profits were made on dinner and on wine.

I was a great lover of the ballet, of which the Empire was the focus. I remember one evening I was with Hector Tennent when he sent for Leopold Wenzel, the conductor of the orchestra. "Wenzel," he said, "I've been looking at your band and I was shocked by the number of bald heads I saw. This is a young man's theatre, and we must have young men playing for them."

Wenzel was shocked. "Those men are skilled musicians," he protested, "and they've been playing here for years."

"Never mind," Tennent told him. "By Monday week I want you to show me an orchestra of young men instead of all those antiquities."

I was commiserating with Wenzel afterwards over what I thought Tennent's unfair treatment when Willie Clarkson, the wig-maker, came up to us. We told him what had happened. "How many men are involved?" he asked.

"Fifteen or twenty," Wenzel said.

"Send them to me," Clarkson replied.

On the Monday week there was not a bald head among the players. "Well done," Tennent said to Wenzel. "I told you it would be all right—and certainly the music's better than ever!"

I had many friends among the dancers in the ballet. (As a matter of fact I had a letter from Adeline Genée as I was revising these notes. I was her first friend in London when she arrived from Denmark, and we have been friends ever since.) From time to time, after I had got my cottage in Essex, I used to arrange a picnic for the Empire ballet girls, for they worked hard and were paid little and had not much fun. A day return ticket cost them half a crown each, and I met them at the station with a wagon, or perhaps two, to take them the five miles to my cottage, where I gave them a good lunch and an afternoon in the garden. I would always rope in two or three other young men to share the burden of entertaining them.

One day one of my helpers turned up late and got lost on his way to my cottage. He stopped and asked an old countryman for directions.

"Ah," said the man, "I know Mr. Bensusan's cottage all right, but if I was you I wouldn't go there to-day."

"Why not?" my friend asked in surprise.

"Well," said the old man, "between me and you, he's a foreign Jew, and he's got forever of wives, and there's days they all come to see him. You want to stay away from there to-day!"

The Essex marshland as I remember it has gone for good. This new power-station at Bradwell is a last final shock to it. I knew that countryside at its very best. I always wanted to have a cottage near the Essex marshes, and I have always had one.

Sometimes in those old days if I was on my own I thought it was hardly worth while opening the cottage and I used to stay at the Queen's Head at Bradwell, kept by a Mrs. Grimwade. For a sitting-room, a bedroom and three good meals a day Mrs. Grimwade used to charge me twenty-five shillings a week.

The farmworkers used to meet there in the evening. They earned ten shillings a week then, and their Saturday sing-songs at the Queen's Head, with beer at twopence a pint, were all the relaxation they had. At first, as a "furriner," I was mistrusted, but I gained their confidence by the simple device of offering to pay for their beer.

After that I was welcomed with enthusiasm, and I became one of a wonderful sodality. I shall never forget the songs we used to sing, all gay and amusing and often completely unprintable.

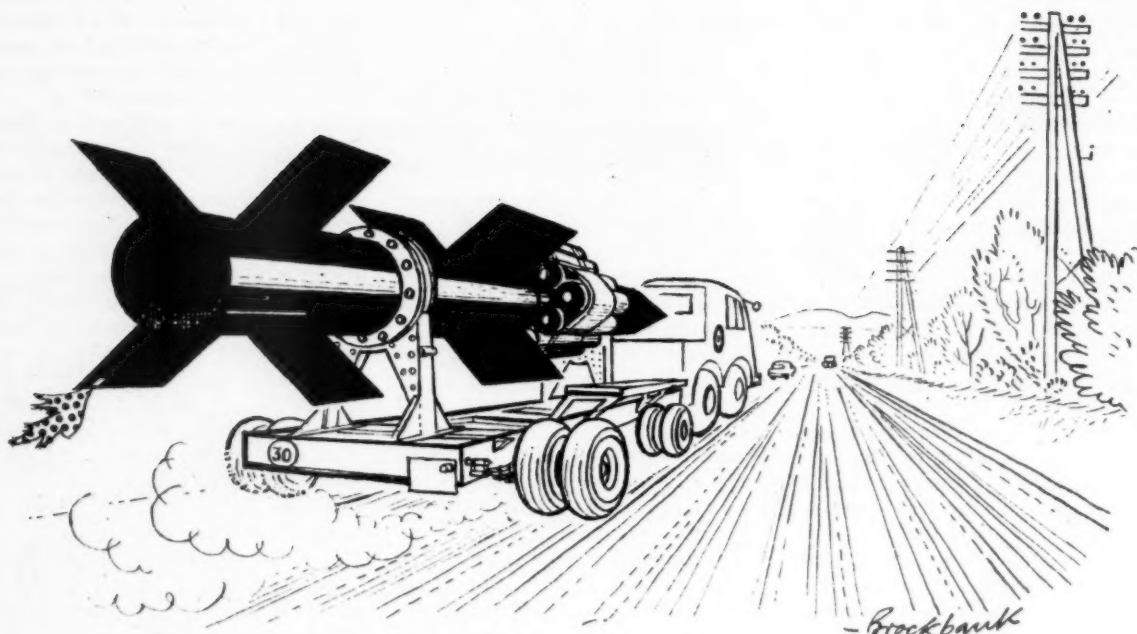
I was a bit of a "sportsman" in those days, and used to rent six hundred acres of shooting around the cottage, as well as a grouse-moor in Scotland in the season. (Nowadays I've had a change of heart about that sort of thing, and regard it as foul. I think it was my study of Buddhism that made me realize what a wrong thing blood sports are.) When I had this shoot it was shamelessly poached by the local countrymen. It was all done so openly that I ventured to protest to the man who leased me the shooting. "I don't mind giving these fellows a rabbit when they want it," I told him, "but this wholesale poaching is too much."

"I know all about it," he admitted, "and I did when I let you the shoot; but what you must understand is that these men are hungry."

"That's all very well," I said, "but surely you ought to have told me about it."

"Well," he said, "I knew you'd learn in a very few days."





About that time I was sitting on a gate when a man with a dog came up to me. "You're the furriner that's taken the shooting," he said.

I agreed that I was.

"Well," he said, "I'm the man that poaches it; and what's more, you can't stop me."

"Indeed," I said, "and why can't I?"

"You haven't the brines," he said candidly.

It was clear that we would either have to be constant enemies or constant friends. I decided we would be friends.

One day, some time later, he came to me. "I'm in trouble," he said. He had been poaching the land next to mine, and been caught, and was up before the magistrates. There was little doubt that he would be sent to prison. "What can I do?" I asked him.

"Nothing for me," he said. "It's the dog. I want you to look after her. I'll tell her to stay with you."

He duly went to prison, and I took the dog. On the second day after I got her she disappeared while we were out for a walk, and I feared I had lost her; but not long after I got home she turned up again, with a rabbit which she brought to me as faithfully as she would have done for her master.

After he had served his twenty-one days the man came back and recovered his dog. We met a week later; the dog took no notice of me at all. The man had told her to stick by me while he was away; now he was back, and he had told her to stay with him. It was a remarkable example of understanding between them.

One of the kindest and best of men in the marshland was one Benjamin Dow, who was head of the Peculiar People, a sect that was very strong thereabouts. He travelled in paraffin, and he always had oranges and sweets for the children of poor people wherever he went, and a good word for everybody—everybody but one, that is, and that was the Pope. "I wouldn't like to say," he opened a conversation with me one day—"I wouldn't like to say what that old Pope of Rome is doing at this very moment. Some mischief, I be bound."

I said mildly that I saw no reason to suppose that he was doing anything unusual. "Ah," he said, "but that old Pope, he believe in Transubstation."

"What's Transubstation?"

Mr. Dow made no attempt to explain. "I count that," he said simply, "a very false an' pornicious doctrine; and that," he added triumphantly, "is why he believes in it."

Out of his life savings Mr. Dow bought three little cottages. One day a match carelessly thrown away by a smoker set light to one of his barrels of paraffin and the whole lot were burnt to the ground. I went to Tillingham, where he lived, to see what I could do. Mr. Dow seemed to be quite undistressed. "When I see them cottages going up," he said, "I give thanks." "But why?" I asked. "Because the Lord allowed me to keep them near twenty years. The Lord gave and the Lord hath taken away."

The people of the marshland are much more prosperous in many ways than they used to be; they earn more money and they have more to do with it. But I don't think all this prosperity is an unmixed blessing. I don't think you would find a man like Mr. Dow in Essex to-day, or indeed in the whole of England; and I think England is the poorer for his passing.

Other contributors to this series, each representing a different decade, will be:

STEPHEN POTTER
PAUL JENNINGS
P. G. WODEHOUSE

My War with France

By BERNARD HOLLOWOOD

THE French crisis came as no surprise to me. I was in Paris a year or so ago and frankly I was amazed that so little progress had been made since my visit in 1929. Everything looked the same, tasted the same, felt the same. All those old buildings, the Tuileries, the Louvre and so on, were still there; the food and wines seemed unchanged; the inhabitants of Montmartre had remained untouched by principles of natural selection and biological evolution. Inertia everywhere. And cynicism.

More particularly I observed that the French had made no progress whatever with their language problem. They were still calling Germany *L'Allemagne* and England *L'Angleterre*. No attempt, you see, to meet the foreigner half-way. When I bought my ticket home the man at the tourist agency gave me luggage labels reading "PARIS—LONDRES."

"Why *le diable* don't you say London like everybody else?" I said sternly. "The capital city of Britain is London, L-O-N-D-O-N, and it's grossly impertinent to call it Londres."

"You perhaps would prefer if we call it Londinium," he said, but in perfect French.

"No, London. We call your country France, just as you do, and we call Paris, Paris. We even have a shot now and then at pronouncing it *Paree*."

He shrugged his heavy shoulders in a gesture of impatience and indifference now common throughout the world (though the French, I admit, still shrug more effectively than other people) and made response.

"It is impertinent," he said, "to describe *La Manche* as the English Channel, but I do not complain."

"Listen," I said. "We British are supposed to be the poorest linguists in the world. Only the other day I asked for *pêche* in one of your restaurants and instead of fish got a dam' great helping of peaches for seven hundred and fifty francs. I admit we are not brilliant at languages, but we are not snobs. You Froggies are all the same. *Londres!* Bah!"

He made a circle with his thumb and first finger, and winked insolently.

"D'you know what," I said, even more sternly, "I blame France for the

failure of the League of Nations and United Nations. Your ridiculous refusal to give other countries their proper names constitutes an inexcusable and continuing discourtesy. More—when-ever possible you seem to take a savage delight in adding diminutive endings to your odious translations. Russie, Australie, Ethiopie, Rumanie and so on. How would you like it if we called France Franclet or Francechen or Francie?"

"The 'r' in France is pronounced," he said, "and the 'a' is longer than you make it. But continue. Any more complaints?"

By this time I was literally dancing with rage. I *chasséd* smartly, executed a smart *fouetté* and looked my man up and down.

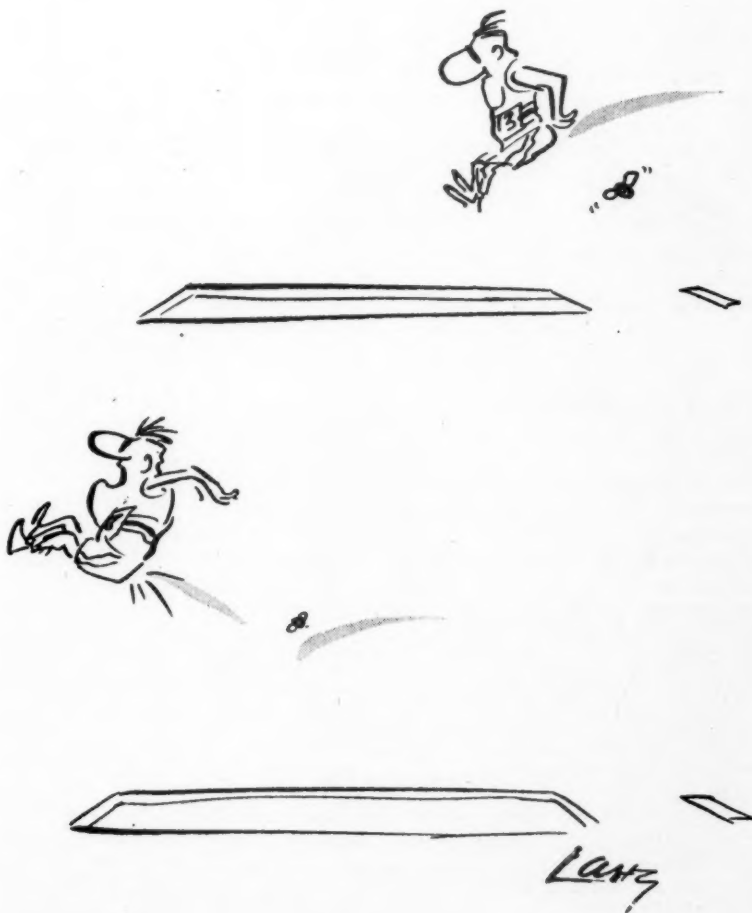
"Yes," I said, "your bread. Everybody carrying dam' great unwrapped rods of the stuff all over Paris with them. It's revolting. Inverted snobbery. Under their arms too!"

"*Au contraire, monsieur*," he said. "The carrying of bread is symbolical. Marie-Antoinette said 'If they have no bread let them eat cake,' so bread is transported as a mark of the people's solidarity. *Vive la république!* In *Angleterre* you do not carry bread, but you still submit meekly to the aristocrats."

"You obviously have not heard of Cousins," I said.

"*Au quai*," he said wearily, misunderstanding me in that infuriating Gallic way common to Frenchmen, "*vive l'entente cordiale*."

"Your gendarmes are derisory,



contemptible, pitiful little squiggles of men. Compare the London Bobby..."

"*Certainement*. With his bushy hat to make him aggrandized and his smug way of directing traffic and that ridiculous strap across his mouth like a horse. In Paris we have fifty thousand artists. In Londres you have but Sir Winston Churchill and he paints like a mortuary cosmetician."

"London," I said.

"*Londres, s'il vous plait*. French remains the universal language of culture, diplomacy and *l'amour*. English is for persons who have their mouths full of American breakfast cereals and ready-mix cake powder and creamless ice-cream."

I took out my pen and before his very eyes altered LONDRES to LONDON.

"You French are all alike," I said. "You're sex-mad."

He took out his pen and added the word *Angleterre*, in brackets, to my London.

"We mustn't have any mistake with your *bagages*, must we?" he said, "There's another Londres in French Canada, you know."

I struck the man a glancing blow.

What Revels are in Hand?

By CHARLES REID

UNDER the heading Sport and Recreation the official Guide to Stratford Upon Avon said "Rose Queen of Shakespeareland Festival will be held on 14th June." Clearly, the thing had to be looked into.

In the breakfast car at Paddington, 9 a.m., three small bloodshot men in caps and belted overcoats stood about with hands in trouser pockets and scattered cigarette ash on the cutlery.

They looked as if they had been typecast for Bushy, Bagot and Green in *Richard II*. They called the steward Guv. No, said Guv, they couldn't have stout laced, or for that matter unlaced, with gin. They made off, muttering. Were they, I wondered, going to set fire to the guard's van?

In the next saloon were Americans, all over fifty, the women with hair permed into miniature bedsprings, the men in eatable hats (of soft biscuit, apparently) with little enamelled port-holes in rows. Their leader spread out coins and notes on a table. He had the firm, piping voice of a chemistry lecturer.

"This," he said, "is a ten shilling note. Usually red. The dollar is seven shillings. There are twenty-one shillings to the guinea. And if anybody comes up to you and tries to sell you Shakespeare's signature, probably he doesn't even know who Shakespeare was."

Stratford had not changed much. The memorial museum roof wasn't leaking, I grudgingly admit. Otherwise the same things were happening.

Bent on filing a radio-gram about hogbristle prices, a towering, silver-haired Chicagoan, his teeth and spectacles flashing enthusiasm and hygiene, loped along Chapel Street and into a square

marzipan building on the corner. He was fetched up and made to scratch his neck by smoky oil paintings of bailiffs and beaules going back to 1553. All Chicagoans in Stratford mistake the town hall for the post office. This gives the townsfolk many a quiet, healing laugh.

A man with a pencil behind his ear humped acetylene gas cylinders and rattling lager crates into the Memorial Theatre restaurant. In the paint shop across the way a man in a smock draped a paint frame with sheets of *Daily Mirror* to keep it stain-free. The thatch on Ann Hathaway's cottage looked more than ever like layers of knitted chain-mail. Outside the cottage a white-haired weaving overlooker and his wife from Burnley finished their iced lollies. Inside a blonde with a Rada accent and a helpless sort of laugh, pretty as a colour ad, said "This is a mantrap. There are *two* sets of steel teeth. The teeth caught you by the leg and crushed the bone. Very cruel." Again the helpless little laugh. After all, there isn't much one can do about the human dilemma.

Having had their third round (by this time they were lacing their gin with stout), Bushy, Bagot and Green piled into a taxi on High Street for the Stratford Upon Avon third May meeting (under National Hunt Rules). For the 3.30 Bagot fancied Vol de Nuit and wasn't going to be put off his fancy by any (demotic) son of a (demotic) punter, see?

In the brewery office where she works the Rose Queen of Shakespeareland 1958 cowed her typewriter, took out her handbag mirror, busied herself with lips, hair, eyebrows. Christine is seventeen, likes dressing up in Elizabethan gowns ("but only for special



"Fault!"

occasions; they're much too awkward for everyday"), and has no opinions at all about quarto and first folio variants. On the 14th, attended by Gentlemen of the Court and Maids of Honour, she will have a felt crown, stiffened with size and entwined with pink roses, placed ceremonially on her hair-do in the grounds of Alveston Manor amid a welter of blank verse, glee singing and folk dancing.

A word about Alveston Manor. Dating, so they say, from the tenth century, it looks like a rosy, transported hunk of Hampton Court. It is owned and run as an hotel ("private bathrooms ... hot and cold ... all beds have interior sprung mattresses") by Tommy Bird. And who is Tommy Bird, pray? Tommy Bird is the man with that enormous scrap dump (trams, steam-rollers, wooden legs, coastal defence guns) along the Birmingham road. Right?

Stowing her lipstick, Christine sped to a converted shop alongside the Froth and Elbow Bar of the Shakespeare Hostellerie. There she found eminent members of the Festival committee worrying themselves mauve at my instigation. Had they made the right decision about the Rose Queen costumes this year? That was the question. I quote:

Miss V: We've done the right thing. No backsliding, now. The Gentlemen of the Court in 1830-ish cutaway coats, high collars and cravats will make a *splendid* change.

Mr. W: How right you are. I prefer things as near modern as we can get 'em, ha-ha-ha-ha. We've got enough old stuff in Stratford. Let's blow a few of the cobwebs off.

Mr. X: Old costumes, new costumes—what difference does it make? It's all a matter of *mind*. How does it go?—

The cloud capp'd towers, the gorgeous palaces,

The solemn temples, the great globe itself,

Yea, all which it inherit, shall dissolve
And, like this insubstantial pageant faded,

Leave not a wrack behind . . .

Mr. Y: Early Victorian dress is stupid. I said it before. I say it now. The Americans will be *expecting* Elizabethan. We've always had Elizabethan hitherto. There are loads of first-class



Elizabethan costumes in the Memorial Theatre wardrobe, ours for the asking.

Mr. Z: Elizabethan dress means getting young men to wear tights. It means they've got to turn out looking like proper Charleys. Well, young men to-day don't *want* to look like proper Charleys. It's trousers or nothing.

Miss V: All agreed on trousers, then?

ALL: Agreed.

GHOST: Swear.

Mr. R: (*hastily*): Where's my hat? Séances make my feet ache. Au revoir, all.

Across an emerald meadow, under a tumbled blue-white sky, Bushy, Bagot and Green watched Vol de Nuit (black and orange stripes, orange slvs, qrted cap) come on from Fair North, take the last flight of hurdles like a kingfisher and win by four lengths at twenty to one. At the mobile bar Bushy, Bagot and Green slapped each other, as well as unoffending strangers, on the back and drank rum laced with barley wine. On the way home they called at a memento shop. Bushy bought a Shakespeare musical jug made in Switzerland which played "There is a tavern in the town" and depicted Shakespeare as a beady-eyed rough given to rouge. Bagot fell for a skull ashtray that said "Better smoke now than hereafter"; Green for a pokerworked table mat with "Marriage is an expensive way of having your food badly cooked."

In a Scholars Lane bar an old man with a rancid pipe told the company that

in 1946 Tommy Bird started rebuilding Alveston Manor by taking out all the exterior bricks in batches and putting them back again the other side round. "And the job's not finished yet." Outside the Judith Shakespeare Tea Rooms ("The Ancient Town Jail, Known as The Cage, is now a Crypt Café in the Basement") a poor little polio boy with leg irons and a slotted box, all in painted plaster, collected occasional pennies. Bushy, Bagot and Green tacked off a Paddington platform arms about each others' necks, singing "There is a tavern" quite against the musical jug's key and tempo.

Behind the Memorial Theatre the sun made a great purple and gold, Festival production to-do about setting.

Another day over. Shakespeare brought off his tomb-break around midnight. He was picked up, cautioned, questioned and cuffed on the pavement outside his Birthplace by a uniformed constable of the County force. He will appear before the magistrates any time now on a charge of squeaking and gibbering in a public thoroughfare without visible means of support.

3 3

Hope for Us Yet

"The discovery of the remains of 10 persons, in a case that apparently involves cannibalism, is a startling reminder of the trust we ordinarily impose in other people . . . How deeply ingrained is our respect for human life is indicated by the extreme rarity of the cannibalism reported from Wisconsin . . ."—*Chicago Daily News*



"Isn't it time we went, dear? I think this gentleman's ready for bed."

Hard Graft at the Caff

By JO PACKER

WHEN I was dishwasher at the Cosmopolitan Café I learnt to divide the customers into two types: those who loused up their fresh grapefruit and let the juice slop overboard, and those who didn't.

The first were cursed, since I had to wash their dishes up again. The second were tolerated. I never scaled any emotion above tolerance when it came to the customers. Strange how so much antagonism could be aroused by a band of unseen people. Unseen, because the boss always kept the door to the dining room firmly shut. As he was a waiter too, it was a good thing he was thin,

since he compelled himself to slip through only the tiniest crack in order that I, at the sink, should not be caught in the line of optic fire directed at the kitchen by fastidious patrons.

The customer to ring the bell for my preliminary bout of fury was the one who came at midday, the minute we opened. I used to arrive at the restaurant at nine, three hours earlier, and scramble round trying to get things straight. But what with feeding the kittens, doing the laundry, peeling the potatoes and onions, making the tea, scrubbing the saucepans, giving orange squash to innumerable errand boys,

cleaning the lettuce and cutting the French rolls, to say nothing of washing up the previous night's dishes and mopping the floor, I was rarely finished by twelve. So the arrival of that first dreaded customer meant panic stations for me. For the boss it usually meant the realization that there was no ice-cream in the fridge. "Jo, quick, run to the shops and get some ice-cream. How much is it?" Daily I told him it was one-and-six a family block, daily he knew not.

When I got back from ice-cream buying—sometimes it was coffee, Turkish Delight, serviettes, or waiter's black

socks for which I was sent—the dining room was half full of customers and the kitchen half full of dirty dishes. So I'd start again and struggle on till three o'clock, when they closed. Angelo, Andrico, and the boss would then go off to some haunt in town and leave me, like a jaundiced Cinderella, to clear up the debris.

The boss was a Greek, and a mess-maker. Everywhere he went things fell to the floor, water sprayed in all directions. I well remember the day he watched me sweep up the floor for the tenth time, then grabbed a plane and started to plane the kitchen table. "Sweep up those shavings," he finally commanded. If those shavings hadn't smelt so nostalgically of the circus I think I would have gone out of his life right then.

The day I told him he was a mess (when he'd climbed on to the roof to scrub the skylight and couldn't resist throwing the bucket of water all over it, forgetting it was open) he said meekly "I know. That's why people don't like

me, but I can't help it. I worry too much."

Maybe he was right. He was only twenty-three, and the amount of food he had to buy staggered me. He couldn't always pay for it promptly. After the time a man brought in a crate of eggs and hung around aggressively waiting for the return of the boss and subsequent payment, and grew impatient but threatened to return on the morrow, I was told never to unlock the door again to anyone suspicious; and the boss cultivated a pistol in his pillow-case. The pillow-case already bulged with the day's takings.

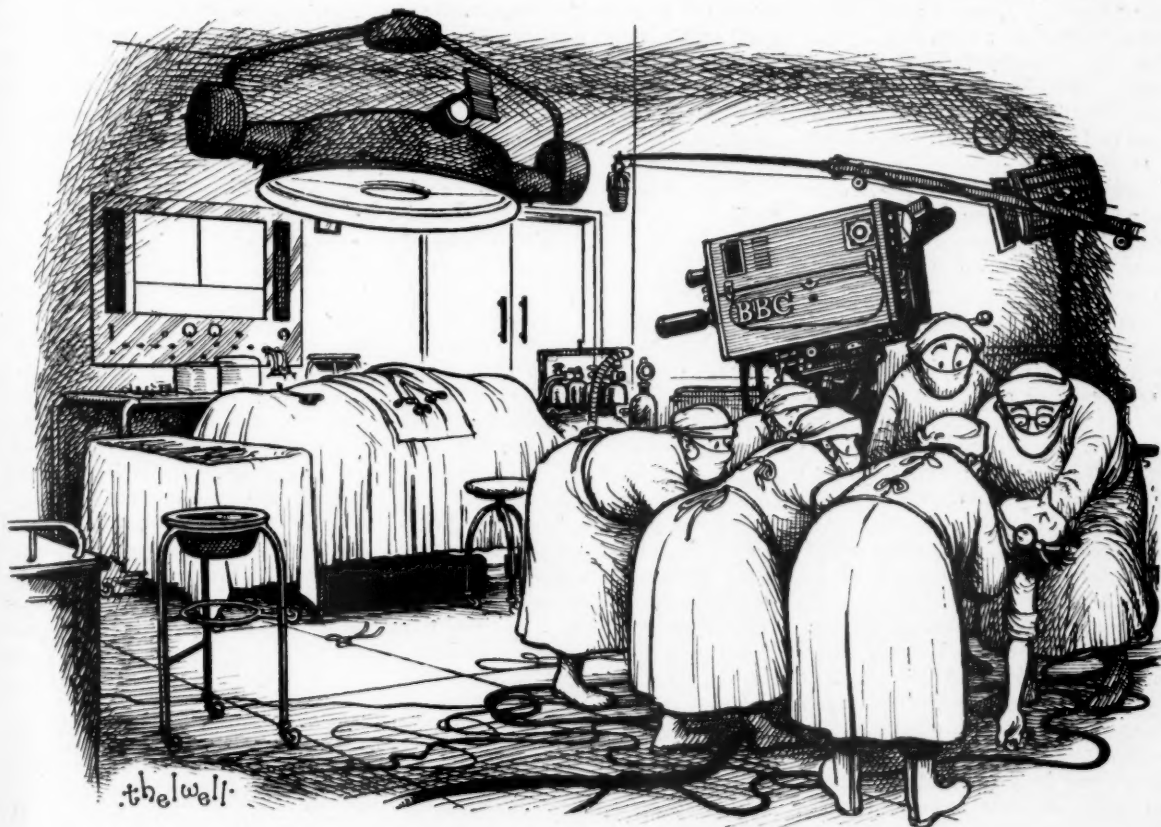
His Greek name sounded like Krago to me, but he called himself Peter. Not only were his creditors after him but lots of girls. "They think I'm rich," he said, gloating over their mistake. To shake a few of them off the scent he adopted yet another alibi. This I know because I read a postcard once when I was clearing up his room, and in it a Maisie greeted her "dearest Ken."

Angelo, the chef, was Greek too, and

surely an angel on earth. He used to touch me deeply at times. The same age as the boss, but with a thicker muscular physique from meat chopping, he was an expert at meat-knife throwing. He swore, however, he had never hit or hurt anyone in his life. I believed him until he taught me boxing, and broke his own pacifist record by clicking my teeth together several times, whereas I could never get anywhere near him.

When he gave me orders, such as "Jump down to the cellar, please, for some ravioli," and I answered "Yessir," great was his grief. "You must not call me 'sir'," he would cry in broken English, "I am not a sir. There is only one sir! Up there," pointing to the sky. "Please, my de-ar," till my heart nearly broke.

Yes, Angelo I remember best with his handsome sweating brown face, offset by a white chef's jacket and his dense black hair shining and the strings on his neck sticking out as he heaved an overflowing pig-bin out to the waiting trailer in the street. Strangely enough he



CHESTNUT GROVE

Leonard Raven Hill contributed drawings to PUNCH between 1896 and 1935, including many political cartoons.



Bargee. "IF ANYTHING 'APPENS TO THAT THERE BRIDGE, I KNOW I SHALL GET THE BLAME FOR IT."

May 21 1924

claimed girls didn't like him because he was a foreigner. The girls round there must have been a sorry lot.

For girls, though, the specialist was Andrico, the little waiter. "We Greeks are great lovers," he used to explain earnestly, his serious small face turned up to mine. To prove it he used to whisper obscure, amorous phrases in Greek and French into my ear, giving it a lick for good measure. Other times he would say "I should like to bite you," and do just that, gripping me meanwhile with a strength which did not seem to match his frail body. When I wriggled he'd say jubilantly "You cannot escape! I am as strong as a spanner!"

He was about thirty-four and a superb waiter. This was brought home to me when once I saw him come through the kitchen door like lightning, with his face screwed up in suspense. Safely in the kitchen he gave a large sneeze and bustled out again.

With his snake-like speed, fuzzy head and charming grin, he was a favourite with all the customers. And the feeling was mutual. "I'm in love, I'm in love!" he often sang, running in with an armful of soup plates. "Who with?" said the rest of us, expecting the name of some new mistress he'd acquired. "Everyone!" came the reply, as he sped away like a black mouse.

Together, the three of them were rowdy and delightful. They carried on long, long arguments in Greek, interspersing words with scuffles and knife-brandishings. Minutes later I would look round, surprised to find them laughing, and myself too, though what at I never knew.

About three-thirty I climbed a steep flight of steps from the scullery, leading up into the open air and the "Garden of Eden." This misnomer was an example of the boss's most advanced stage of wit, because it was but a tiny plot, twenty feet by thirty, and knee deep in boxes, newspapers, cans, old stoves, pipes, planks and lino. A few dandelions thrust through crevices in the rubble and there was a single, brave hollyhock. But it was an ideal place for sunbathing. Level with the restaurant roof and surrounded by roofs of factories, shops and houses, it had a real "On the Water-front" flavour. I lay there for two hours, soaking in the sun, till work time came round again.

At five-thirty I cautiously descended, keeping an eye open for Andrico, who was wont, on these occasions, to cry "I like brown arms," descend as a hawk to its prey, and start kissing my carefully nurtured suntan. If I was lucky he was upstairs changing into his waiter's uniform, for we were open once again.

About eight, when trade was slack, the boss would go off "on business," and the other two would go mad. Andrico would sit near the kitchen door to listen for customers, and taking a stool between his knees, beat out a jungle rhythm. Angelo would abandon his Hungarian goulash and spaghetti polonaise and start to shake his hips and click his fingers. I would watch, mesmerized, this uninhibited display—nevertheless my hands kept reaching automatically for the slabs of saucers stacked up on the draining board.

Around eleven I knew it was getting near finishing time, because the English patrons all went home and the Greeks of the city began to congregate. They clustered around the tables and ordered Turkish coffee and glasses of iced water. "Refill these glasses," ordered the boss, coming in with a dozen, banging them on the table and knocking them all over as he turned away, "the boys are thirsty." "The boys are a perishing nuisance," was the worst reply I could think up, because I was looking forward to our own dinner at midnight.

It would finally come—the best time of the whole day. The shop cleared at last of chattering Greeks, Angelo fried his last batch of food—four thick steaks with chips, raw onions, tomatoes and cucumber. We sat in the dining room to eat and the "Closed" sign was on the door. One might have thought that the three lads would be tired after a day's work and eat slowly and digest. But no—months of snatching food in between serving customers had rendered them distinctly untardy in their habits; like wolves, like savages, they ate, belching and gobbling and shovelling and stuffing, ripping and clawing and tearing at their French rolls, swigging and swilling and slurping at gin, whisky and orange squash, jabbering gibberish and talking with their mouths full.

As I walked homeward I sadly reflected that such eating methods are dreadfully, horribly catching. That is why I am no longer acceptable in certain circles.

"President Eisenhower took off by helicopter from the White House lawn to-day for a week-end at his Gettysburg farm. Mr. Eisenhower went by car."—*Daily Telegraph*
Any sign of the General?

Further Translations from the Ish

(The Ish language, which I invented myself and am therefore uniquely fitted to translate, offers an exact equivalent of every idiom and pun possible in English. Astonishing it is, really astonishing.)

UNGALLANT PORTRAIT

A BEAUTIFUL bull-necked blonde
Who will never
See forty again,

She had a good look at it
While it was there.

SILVER LINING

Life may be hard,
And yet how many problems
Pass us by!

Only the driven few
Have to proof-correct
Lists of winning Premium Bonds,
Or find a way to allow for
Street fighting
In traffic-accident statistics.

PRECOGNITION

After it occurred to him
It happened to him.

LOOK HERE, SHAKESPEARE

Chimney-sweepers *don't* come to dust.
(And they don't stay to pray either.)

TESTIMONIAL

She can type at such speed
That a word of any length
Sounds like a raspberry.

JOURNALIST'S SNARL

"Don't use words
That send the housewife to the
dictionary"?
That'll be the day—
When she *goes*.

HIDDEN DEPTHS

He's different when you know him.
Compare those pubs
Where the way to the Saloon
Is through the Public Bar.

NICE POINT

Is it the desire to please he has,
Or the desire to be thought
Desirous of pleasing?

NOTE ON TWO FAMILIAR COMPARISONS

Some eggs are very unsure indeed,
And thieves,
Except of sums reckoned by the
thousand—
And by the Yard—
Are not commonly thick.

NIGHTMARE

Till I touch it, how to tell
Whether that's a brain
Or an oversize walnut?

THINK

The fact of murder
Proves insanity.

No? You mean that, given those
circumstances,
A sane man murders, and would be
insane
If he didn't?

RICHARD MALLETT

LETTERS

(Letters addressed to the Editor, unless specifically marked otherwise, may be considered for publication.)

To the Editor of Punch

SIR,—Referring to your "East is West" articles, an atomic war would be unpleasant for us but a good thing for our descendants. It would destroy our civilization and produce very numerous mutations. The enormous majority, being harmful, would be cancelled by the deaths of their "carriers"; the favourable ones—unusually high intelligence, social co-operativeness, abnormal lack of aggression—would survive. Three hundred years after the Blast historians will write of good out of evil, the enormous benefits inevitably brought about by their ancestors' holocaust. They will pity us, but will not regard us as really human. Will they not be right?

Yours faithfully,
Nicosia, Cyprus GEOFFREY STONE

KNIGHT ERRANT

To the Editor of Punch

SIR,—I wonder whether Ronald Searle fully realized how apt was his admirable cartoon of General de Gaulle in the guise of Don Quixote? Referring to Chapter One of the novel we learn that our hero turned knight-errant for two reasons. The first was to add lustre to his name and the second was to serve his republic! I am, sir,

Yours faithfully,
Surbiton, Surrey R. C. HOWARD



"We just couldn't separate them."

SALES TALK

(for devotees of "The Times" Classified Advertisements)

OF THIS AND THAT

NEW SERIES NO. 314

This week my little lucubration is suggested by a visit I paid over a recent week-end to two young friends who will, I know, forgive me for referring to them under the names of Timothy and Kitten. I partook lavishly of their excellent fare. Even in these ungraceful times Kitten does not praetermit her duties in the still-room and the ice-house nor does Timothy keep his best wine from his old friends. During the evening while the candle-light flickered in the highly polished rosewood panelling and Kitten was allowed to stay and share the gentlemen's nuts and marsala, I threw idly into the conversation the question whether our children will inherit the instinctive recognition of quality that has been our own heritage.

"I know that mine have," Timothy said forthrightly.

"Let us make a test," cried Kitten, clapping her hands—hands, I may add, that have never shirked a task, whether the right preparation of venison or the true grafting of mulberries.

Forthwith the younger generation was fetched from bed. For our test I suggested we should present them with a jar of my own Potted Pilchard that I had brought with me as my contribution to the *douceur de vivre*, a contribution I have not dared for many years to overlook, and, for comparison, a jar of some kind of fish product left behind by some people who had dropped in for tea.

And the verdict? The jury of five unanimously convicted me of presenting them with a gustatory experience of the most blissful degree, while acquitting the manufacturers of the alternative of attempted edibility.

As I said good-bye to my kindest, dearest host and hostess on the Monday morn, I yet once more expressed my agreement with Timothy: the younger

generation does indeed recognize The Best when it sees it.

May I venture the suggestion that you cannot do better than follow their example?

My Potted Pilchard may be obtained in Family Size, Economy Crock, Gracious Urn and, for such occasions as Political Rallies, Dower Chest.

MR. DUMBLE'S DIARY

SUN. Passing The Dorcas, a neat Queen Anne residence with as fine a box hedge as you will see the length and breadth of England, I remembered that my old friends Captain and Mrs. Timothy Preen-Evershed lived there. Decided to drop in as I rather fancied I had something with me that would interest them. Usual warm welcome and tea in the Damask Drawing Room, amid the rose-petals and the bay leaves and the silken fans. One or two other folk there, no doubt attracted by the excellence of good Mrs. Twitchett's Ayrshire scones. How Claud and Eva and Mouse and Billy-Boy and Janice are growing!

The conversation turning to the best way of keeping the succulence of trout while losing nothing of the protein content, I displayed a little fancy of my own, a Traveller's Pack of my Preserved Trout, suggesting that it might well form a course in the sumptuous supper I knew would be following Evensong. Indeed, that is advice I would share with a larger audience than the Preen-Eversheds! Agreed with fellow-guest that there is nothing to replace Evensong, especially when followed by Preserved Trout.

Write for dimensions of Widow's Cruse.

EPISTLES TO BOBBITY

Dear Bobbity,

On Sunday I had the ever delightful experience of spending the day in the

company of my little friends at The Dorcas. Janice sends her love to you. What a refreshful day it was, though pretty strenuous too. Croquet, tennis, racing Old Dobbin the mowing horse and rattling in the windmill can be rather taxing occupations when you are more *Senex* than *Juvenis*. Of course we attended Mattins and Evensong. The good Squire takes his rightful place as Vicar's Warden. As a matter of fact he rather wanted my advice on whether to replant the churchyard with Cypress (the Greek *Kupressos*) or Yew. I was able to offer to do the job for him rather more cheaply than he would be able to get it done by a non-Anglican contractor. The maintenance of our churchyards and of our woods is, I often feel, a trust laid upon us. Over tea I was glad to find that a fellow-guest agreed that there is nothing more agreeable than walking to Evensong through a really lovingly afforested churchyard.

Yours sincerely,

T. Hughes Wilkinson

Why not let me help you to solve your Churchyard perplexities? Send for brochure on Reverent Topiary.

MUSING HERE AND MUSING THERE

A Stitch in Time

Put off what should be done to-day and to-morrow it may take far longer.

OUT OF THE MOUTHS

I had intended to wash the tennis net but the house became quite jammed with people and now that the week has begun again I do not know when I shall find time to do it, because Kitten has all the kids down with ptomaine and the Vicar is kicking up a shindy over the suggestion that the beeches he sees from his study window should be cut down and replaced by yews. When poor little Eva said "How nice it would be if nobody ever came to see us" I couldn't help agreeing.

NOT GOOD TO BE OUT OF THINGS

Yey it is too easy to get Out of Touch. The mind must not let the body down and the best way to avoid this is to keep an ear open for what is really going on in the world.

Captain Timothy Preen-Evershed LIB's News-Letter (Post-free for orders over six dozen) helps you to understand the meaning of contemporary movements in the Arts, Sciences, Politics and Social Fashions. The News-Letter, founded by his grandfather, gave the first news of Relativity, Escapism and the Anglo-Soviet Draft Treaty of 1924. Each issue includes a recipe and a summary of the foreign press. This month's recipe: Family Fish-Ball. R. G. G. PRICE





"I shouldn't dream of going. I don't like death-watch beetles."



"Don't kid yourself, vicar, my ardour was dampened before we even came."



"I didn't think there could be any harm; after all she is one of our old Sunday-school girls."



"If it comes to that I could reveal a few details about your past."

FÊTE ACCOMPLIE

Hands Across the Curtain

By J. B. BOOTHROYD

The Moscow Arts Theatre visit is almost over. It is thought to have contributed greatly to East-West understanding.

THE important thing, I thought, as I ascended the Arts Council's staircase to the din on the first floor, was not to confuse the player with the part. Up there at the reception I should find no Lopakhin, only Lukyanov who had played Lopakhin. Any impulse to cry "Charlotta Ivanovna!" and kiss the lady's hand would be a mistake. Charlotta Ivanovna belonged in Chekhov; the actress who blew life into her was Angelina Isosifovna Stepanova. It was going to be difficult. There was the language barrier. The sound barrier, too. The room was already roaring when I reached it. I brushed Sir Laurence and Lady Olivier aside and made for the bar. My eye lit simultaneously on a bottle of Smirnoff and Vassily Alexandrovich Orlov.

"Sir?" said the barman.

"Orlov," I said. "I mean Smirnoff."

I got both. Orlov, cleared of the whiskers which had made him the Vanya of the night before, beamed to hear his name, and saluted me with a neat bite on a small pastry-boat of caviar. I downed my vodka and shook his hand. "Uncle Vanya!" I said. He roared. So did I. We were a jolly

pair. Me and Moscow's Gielgud-Olivier-Redgrave-Richardson rolled into one. But after that the conversation flagged. I was near to bursting with bonhomie. To be unable to communicate it was painful. A certain flow of soul had been established, it was true, and I could no doubt repeat the exercise by seizing the arm of Koltsov, who was being pressed into my back by Mr. Paul Scofield, and yelling "Tuzenbakh!" in his ear. But another stalemate would follow. Besides, I wasn't certain that he hadn't played Vershinin, not Tuzenbakh at all. It would be a blunder.

As in international conferences an interpreter fortunately intervened, a small, pale figure in brown. He materialized between Orlov and me, ready to cement our relations. Yet, thrust in this way on to the limitless seas of small talk, I foundered shamefully. "Do you like England?" I said to Orlov. The interpreter asked him if he did. He said he did. In the pause a lady in a costly hat plucked the interpreter's sleeve and said "I have Dame Peggy here..." He detached his arm. "First I answer this gentleman questions," he said, and turned to me

expectantly. So did Orlov. I turned to the Smirnoff. Well-projected English voices swirled about me. "Your Yasha was marvellous, marvellous," they said. "But of course I adored your Serebriakov..." Russian actors beamed with ten per cent comprehension, and bowed from the neck up. I wasn't going to slip into dressing-room flatulences of this kind. I said to Orlov "Have you seen any cricket?" At least, in that setting, it was original. He cocked a lively ear at the interpreter, received him loud and clear, flung up his hands and seized my upper arms in an ecstasy. He spoke at some length. His accents were those of high esteem. He threw back his plumed grey head and extended his arm to the leg boundary, but turned his head to the off. The interpreter smiled with reflected pleasure and said that Orlov was always delighted to meet a critic, that in Russia they saw the critics often, that critics and actors were on the best of terms in Moscow. During this disastrous misunderstanding Orlov laughed aloud and pointed grandly at what I should have taken for the square-leg umpire a moment before, but now knew to represent the front row of the stalls.

"I think you ought to meet Sir Donald Woffit," I said, with a non-sequitur probably blurred in translation. I waved and dived into the throng, presently surfacing between two faces I knew but could not place. The man was tall, erect and dreamily handsome; the girl was gay and carrying a small tray. I seized her elbow. "Tell me, isn't this Pavel Massalsky?" She trilled with laughter. "Do you know, I simply can't remember their names. But he plays Gaieff in *The Cherry Orchard*." As she disappeared I realized that it was Irene Worth.

Massalsky stood alone. I clicked my heels. "Gaieff!" I exclaimed. He gave me a joyous smile, and spoke in genial terms. The din was now louder. Behind the bar empty bottles were entering hidden crates with the regularity of an artillery salute. I recalled dimly that I had seen Massalsky in *The Three Sisters* too, and interrogated him accordingly. "Er—Vershinin?" I said. He was delighted. I thanked him. I think he



"I'll tell you why I'm failing history. I don't know what to remember. They keep changing the history books."

thanked me. We toasted each other. A small, pale figure in brown materialized between us, not before time. "Would you please tell Mr. Massalsky," I said, "that I am particularly curious as to how the thunderstorm effect is produced in *Uncle Vanya*. Also the very clever way the window curtains blow about. It is done extremely well in my opinion. Would you tell him that, please?" The man in brown grinned broadly and put down his caviar in order to shake my hand. "Chernov!" he announced. He was not the interpreter, but Bocharov from *The Troubled Past*. I thanked him. He turned me through ninety degrees and introduced me to Mikhail Nikolayevich Kedrov, and an indicator flew up in my mind, referring me to my illustrated Souvenir Programme . . . Kedrov, none other . . . Badge of Honour, Red Banner of Labour, Order of Stalin, producer of *Uncle Vanya*, Semyonov-Pischik of *The Cherry Orchard*, Professor of Acting at the Moscow Arts Theatre Teaching Studio, personal pupil of Stanislavsky, disciple of Nemirovich-Danchenko.

He shook my hand. The real

interpreter popped out of the throng like a squeezed orange pip. "Ask Mr. Kedrov how they do the thunder," I said. Other topics eluded me. Cricket was out. My invention was waning. If my question was the equivalent of asking Sir Carol Reed about the mechanics of usherettes' torches that was too bad. I was doing my best. The great man's face straightened, and he turned away.

"Pop off," he said.

Vladimir Popov, the interpreter

explained, was in charge of the effects. Would I care to have him brought to me? On the whole I thought not. For better or worse I had done my bit for international relations. It was two o'clock. Handing my glass with a bow to an official of the Arts Council who bore an odd resemblance, it occurred to me afterwards, to Yuri Leonidov's Solyony of *The Three Sisters*, I made for the stairs and off I popped. Tiring, these high-level talks.



How Sweet Were Your Twenties?

By ALEX ATKINSON

"If an occasional shadow falls across the pages, maybe you will not notice it . . . maybe it is in my eyes alone."

Beverly Nichols, in *The Sweet and Twenties*

AND now I really must say a little about Mrs. Gumme (or "Effie," as she was known to her intimates). In many ways Effie Gumme was the 'twenties. Her parties, which she teasingly referred to as "do's," haunt the perfumed alleys of my memory . . . so that I have only to say "Mrs. Gumme," at any hour of night or day, to find myself transported backwards through time to that sweet, enchanted era.

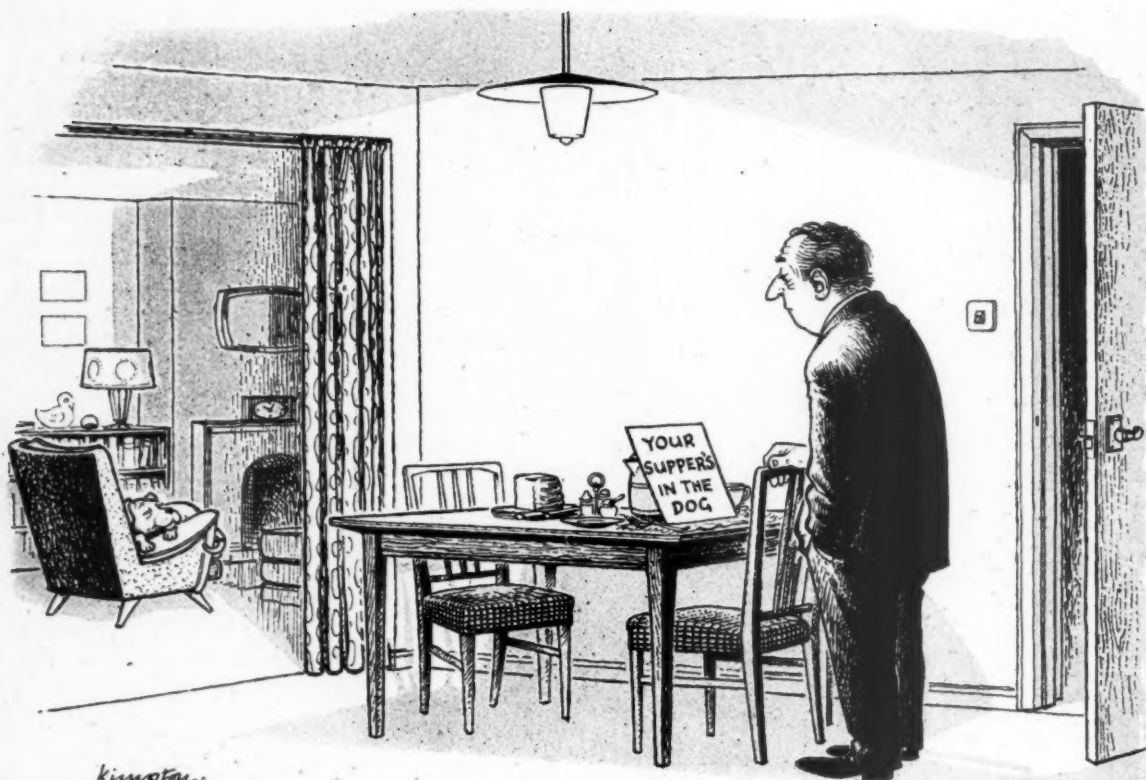
"Mrs. Gumme," I murmur, when to-day's harsh world is threatening to break my heart in two: and in a trice I hear again the rattle of thick, chipped, pink-and-white plates as Fred ("Squinty") Jones (later assistant buyer in the corset and bloomer department of Messrs. Shuggleton and Son, in Canal Street) did the drying-up in Effie's back kitchen, before joining the rest of us for ha'penny Put-and-Take. I see again the horizontal plum and

ochre stripes of Effie's fabulous party-dress, bought for eighteen shillings on that chilly February day when seven thousand Armenians were massacred in Cilicia, and paid off at sixpence a week through the Eze-Way Clothing Club. Once more I hear the great big thump as Ernie Rudge (later second doorman at the Marigold Commercial Hotel in Upper Cinder Lane) fell over Cynthia's hutch in the front parlour during a game of Sardines and broke the glass of his Uncle Archie's half-crown gun-metal watch. (Cynthia was little Eva Gummie's darling pet rabbit, and Uncle Archie was later to marry Winnie Hodgkinson, who once won an imitation marble ash-tray at the Working Men's Club annual Whist Drive and Social, and later became a waitress in the Buffet Room opposite Platform 2 in Chimney Road Station.)

It was hinted at the time in certain quarters that Ernie Rudge was so full

of bottled beer when he fell over the hutch that he didn't even notice the gash on his shin until the blood trickled down and made his sock stick to his leg. Actually, I happen to know that Ernie ("Belch," as we used to call him) never drank anything but stout—eighteen bottles a night—and he used to hit his auntie, who lived with them.

Dear Mrs. Gumme! If she had only been able to afford a proper set of teeth, or do something about her cough, she might easily have found another hubby. (Arnold, whom she married when she was only thirty-nine, later became an Inspector on the trams. He died of influenza the day after the Gordon-Bennet balloon race disaster. He was a great loss to our madcap circle, for he used to roll up his trousers, stick a penny in one eye, and do a very funny dance with Lily Nesbit—who was, of course, to become a part-time cleaner at the Bijou Kinema in Gravel Street.)



Kimpton.

Dear, dumpy Effie! She had naturally carrot-coloured hair and a passion for threepenny trebles. She was a born hostess, with a particular flair for exciting food. I have seen two large tins of salmon opened in her back kitchen in one evening (it was Boxing Day, I grant you), with pineapple chunks to follow. And the people! How well I remember the night when we filled Agnes Lump's Russian boots with wet tea-leaves. (She later married Ned Sledge, one of the tallest unemployed mechanics in the whole of the fast-living Clinker Avenue set.) After that we ate a whole quarter-pound box of assorted milk chocolates between the six of us!

What a gay, feckless crowd you met at Effie's do's! There was Annie Smith, who won thirty-three shillings on Call Boy in the Derby, and impulsively spent every penny of it towards treatment for her mother's bad leg. There was Sam Duggle, the out-of-work miner with an acid wit. I can hear him now as he fell into the fire, pulling Effie's alarm clock off the mantelpiece with him, shouting:

"The smoke goes up the chimney just the same!" There were Gert and Alfie Plug (both later bound over for shop-lifting), who used to insist on bringing their five children to every party, and often fought with shovels in the back-yard. There was Sid ("Swiftie") Swift, the bookie's runner, later second steward on a banana boat, who was reputed to take home a minimum of eighty shillings a week in wages, and *always* handed round the packet when he had a cigarette (or "fag," as we called them).

But enough of name-dropping . . .

Yes, extravagant we were, if you like—even reckless. But you must remember that those were exciting days. Who could remain calm and sober when thrilling world events seemed to froth and effervesce from day to day—the opening of the New Tilbury Dock and the L.C.C. County Hall, the Hatry Group Crash, the abdication of King Amanullah, the burning of Madame Tussaud's, the reopening of the Luxor Tomb, the inauguration of Canberra, James Ramsay MacDonald, the Wembley Exhibition, the eruption of

Vesuvius, the canonization of Joan of Arc? Naturally we reacted to this heady atmosphere. I remember that when Temme swam the Channel tomboy Alice Bickers—later the wife of Councillor Herbert ("Bert") Drum—caused a sensation in Mick's Posh Fish Bar, the most exclusive night-spot in Soot Road, by throwing all the vinegar bottles at an old school chum, one after the other, crying "Why don't you get your bob shingled?"

But *were* we so degenerate? What finally emerged from that carefree crowd of young people in Stackley all those years ago? One wholesale fishmonger, three barmaids, a part-time night-club hostess, four War Substantive Corporals, a professional banjo-player, and a sports reporter on the *Stackley Gazette*. Not a bad record, I think.

So *don't* be too hard on us. After all, if you had had our opportunities—if you had happened to find yourself in such enchanting company, when the world was young and life went by in a whirl—would *you* have behaved so very differently?

Bottlenecks

By R. P. LISTER

I AM shortly going to have too many Red Indians for my Chianti bottles. The Chianti bottles have been rather static lately, but the Red Indians keep coming in.

I smile now to think of the time, only a few short months ago, when I had only two Red Indians, and tried to give them away. It must have been last October, because it was the time of the Motor Show, and my brother was in town. Most of the year he sits in a high tower up on a hill, looking over towards the Great Cumbrae and wondering if the rain will ever stop. But once a year he comes up to town for the Motor Show, though he sold his last car a couple of years ago, not long after I sold mine. His was a 1936 Pontiac and mine was a 1934 Daimler, but let that pass. I asked him if he would like two Red Indians, and he looked at me with scorn. "I have three daughters," he said. "How could I possibly do with two Red Indians?"

Since then the Red Indians have been pouring in. I could have sent them away, three at a time, to my nieces, but Red Indians are habit-forming, like almost anything else. As soon as I had three I had the nucleus of a collection. Such collections become extensions of the personality, and are only discarded at grave risk of psychic imbalance.

I was sitting the other day with three barristers on the stump of a great tree on the edge of Grim's Ditch in the Chilterns, eating sausages and talking of a number of things, including drip-dry shirts. One of the barristers, a Socialist, was telling us of his collection of pins. This barrister needs twelve pins a year; he uses one a month, to pin his cheque to his rent bill. His laundry, however, returns his shirts bristling with pins, and since several shirts come back every week the intake of pins into his flat is consistently very much in excess of the outflow. His collection of pins is becoming a serious embarrassment; boxes of pins turn up wherever he moves. Soon, he thinks, he will have to take to drip-dry shirts that he can wash himself, thereby avoiding the intake of pins, or else move to a larger flat. The one thing he is incapable of doing is of disposing in any way of the pins, which would be contrary to human nature.

The second barrister, a Liberal, confessed that he kept, in a number of drawers in the large house he is fortunate enough to own, all the counterfoils of all the cheques he had ever signed. The third, a Conservative, had kept every letter he had received since the age of 28; and, not content with this, he was an inveterate string-unraveller. I have passed through this phase myself and recognized with sympathy his account of how he carefully untied all the knots in any incoming string, wound the string into a neat coil and housed it in the latest of a large accumulation of

string-filled boxes. This barrister never dispatches any parcels, though he receives many. He is about to take silk, and is anxious about the effect this may have on his incoming mail. Any increase in the input of letters or string to his private residence might, he said, have a serious effect on his detached judgment of knotty points of law.

Having this galaxy of legal talent so conveniently at my disposal, I put before them my problem of the shortage of Chianti bottles in which to house my Red Indians. The Red Indians, I explained, although they will stand up by themselves, are *rocky* on their feet. The only place in which they can conveniently be housed and displayed is in



"Do you think you could find someone to suit my wife?"



"F.8 at one-fiftieth. Landscape shape, dear."

the necks of the Chianti bottles which I keep hanging from my bookshelves, out of a sheer inability to throw away Chianti bottles. The Red Indians sink up to their shoulders in the necks of the bottles, and there remain, looking inscrutably out across the unplumbable gulf. There are now only two bottle-necks untenanted by Red Indians, and the Red Indians come in at the rate of about one every ten days. A crisis is clearly imminent.

I am happy to say that on this occasion, away from the dust and clang of the political arena, all three parties agreed on the strategy I should adopt. There were two alternatives open to me. One was to change to a different breakfast cereal so that I no longer received a Red Indian with every packet; and the other was to drink more Chianti.

Since the consultation was an informal one, the legal advice I received was free. I only wish I could say the same for Chianti.

Pacific Intentions

"You don't have to go to Tahiti to find straw huts beside a warm blue sea, to explore deserted sun-drenched islands, to wear a sarong and dance barefoot under the stars—at the Club's holiday villages in the MEDITERRANEAN you can enjoy the South Seas way of life for only £40!"

Advertisement in The Times

WHEN you're sick of your civilization,
When you're feeling restrained and repressed,
When you long to be noisy and nerveless,
To be decadent, drunk and undressed,
You don't have to go to Tahiti
To wear your sarong with a swing:
We can find you instead a place in the Med.
Which is just like the genuine thing.

You don't have to go to Tahiti
To exorcize civilized man,
But make for the Mediterranean,
Where civilization began.
You don't have to seek the Pacific
To find atavistic release:
Provided your mind is sufficiently blind,
You can manage it cheaper in Greece.

B. B.-P. DURHAM

In the City



Tending the Frills

ONE of the features of the march of economic civilization (let us assume that it is advancing) is the increasing proportion of man's energies and ingenuity devoted to the servicing and entertainment of his fellow men. As the working week gets shorter, one of the great problems of economic organization, at least in the relatively rich industrialized countries, is not how to furnish the basic essentials but how to fill in the leisure and provide for the thrills of life.

Mechanization and automation are pushing in the same direction. As fewer workers are needed for the basic pursuits such as the production of food, coal, steel, engines and the rest, more will be available to satisfy the less essential needs. It was pointed out recently that in the United States more than 60 per cent of the working population is now engaged in providing services such as retail selling, entertainment, beautifying, etc., and less than 40 per cent in actually making things.

Here is a trend that will persist to infinity, and the only serious reservation one has about it is whether the present system of education is fitting our people to make use of the ever-increasing leisure that will be theirs.

In terms of investment policy this is one of the fundamental data on which decisions must be based. If this be the trend, then it follows that the greatest scope for expansion in business and profits lies with industries that cater for the pleasures rather than the basic needs of mankind.

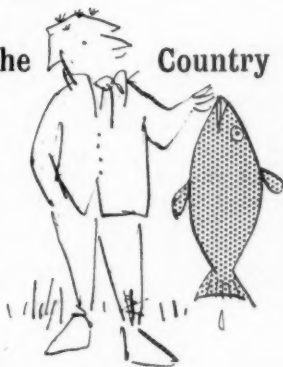
Translated in more specific terms, this principle is well illustrated by one of the most spectacular of all the little boomlets that have recently been found in British industry, namely, in the sale of gramophone records and of the Hi-Fi reproducers that go with it.

It was once assumed that with the advent of sound broadcasting and later of television the gramophone would

vanish from the scene. Far from it; the sale of records in Great Britain, which totalled £5,000,000 in 1947 and had doubled to £10,000,000 in 1953, had doubled again to £20,000,000 in 1957, and is expected to reach between £22,000,000 and £23,000,000 this year. The gramophone boom is on, stimulated by the long-playing record but with further expansion beckoning from such new developments as stereophonic sound.

The record companies have been making good profits. Electric and Musical Industries and Decca are reputed between them to manufacture 75 per cent of the records sold in this country. Philips and Nixa produce another 15 per cent. Some outsiders are muscling in on this lush business, and Ranks have recently announced the formation of a Record Club.

In the Country



Old Hat

THERE should be a ready sale for gleaning rights on old fishing hats. The connoisseur of trout and salmon flies may strike it rich on obsolescent piscatorial headgear, such as mine.

Time, tempest, and mishap in an area previously frequented by bullocks, ended its active career. It had been perspired in, cursed under, and sat upon from Hammerfest to Cornwall. When the truth dawned that the old hat would never be worn again I hung it on a hook in the garage.

There it was illuminated by the headlights whenever the car returned after dark. Each time the old hat, dulled as it now was by cobwebs as well as age, sent back an answering gleam. Eventually curiosity had to be satisfied. The result was a minor drama in a fisherman's life.

The car lights had been reflected by the body of a Teal and Silver. In good condition, too. At present prices worth at least half a crown. Out came my pocket knife; I cut the fly free and carried it into the house.

W. H. Smith's bookstalls are now preparing for the sale of long-playing records.

Deccas and "Emmies" are, however, the best known and the cream of the investments conjured up by the gramophone boom. Each of these companies has interests spread well beyond the manufacture of records. They produce radio and television sets. They have also dug deeply into the electronics field which with its industrial applications comes into the sphere of automation.

And so we come round full circle. These two companies, and there are some others besides them, help to create the vacuum of leisure by making the machines that do man's work and even some of his thinking, and then they proceed to fill that vacuum with their radio and television sets, gramophones and long-playing records. It is a perfect formula.

LOMBARD LANE

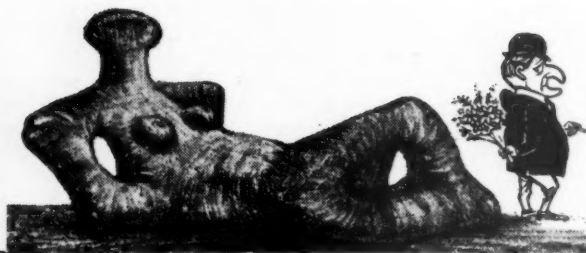
But, hey, what was this? No ordinary Teal and Silver. Its symmetry and austerity of hackle betokened a genuine Pryce-Tannatt. As Rembrandt painted or Fabergé wrought in gold, so Pryce-Tannatt ties salmon flies, and this one revealed the master's hand. So might a prospector have felt on tripping over some monstrous nugget.

Whence one treasure came, others might lie. Within seconds the old hat was indoors and riches lay revealed. From the weather-stained tweed came two unchallengeable Sherry Spinners by Malcolm Logan and a Grey Wulff tied by Tommy Phelps himself. Others, less distinguished in artifice, breathed memories which should have put them, and now did put them, among my household gods.

My old hat had yielded, as an aftermath to nineteen years of service, seventeen flies of origins ranging from the sublime to the ridiculous. Some had been embedded in it at moments of frustration, others retired there after victory. Nothing remarkable in that of course. All fishermen stick flies in their hats, great men as well as humble.

Perhaps a faded tricorn still exists (fishermen wore them once) in which a one-armed angler pressed his fly as he reeled in his line and departed for Trafalgar. Perhaps again, since fishing is the sport of the might-have-been, a few scraps of ancient fibre yet enclose a hook in some long neglected lumber room in Winchester Close. It is on record, as every schoolboy knows, that Izaak Walton wore a hat.

WILSON STEPHENS

FOR
WOMEN

Not so Shocking

MADAME ELSA SCHIAPARELLI, as readers of her *Shocking Life* are reminded all the way through, was a legend in her early life-time. Perhaps she has outlived her legend; or perhaps she has become bored with it. At any rate here she was in London last week at a party given in her honour, so unremarkably dressed that guests were inquiring "Which is Schiaparelli?"

How different from the days when she startled Paris by wearing a hat like a lamb cutlet with a white frill on the bone, and shocked St. Moritz by appearing in coloured wigs: white-and-silver for evening, red for the snow. The shock in London, this time, was one of disappointment that she was wearing a plain black suit, plain blue hat, plain black shoes, and plain stockings without even the hint of a shocking tint—in conversation Schiaparelli declared herself against the new tinted nylons; she only approves *thick* coloured stockings, for the country. We wished she had brought Pascall with her, the golden-haired lay figure, mascot of the boutique in the Place Vendôme, who always wore the most eccentric accessories and accompanied her on one of her trips to America. Also in the boutique, at one time, there was Salvador Dali's stuffed bear with drawers in his stomach, dyed shocking pink, dressed in an orchid satin coat and loaded with jewels. "Is the rumour true, Madame Schiaparelli, that you are going to reopen your boutique in partnership with Salvador Dali?" "Certainly not, I would rather be dead! Dali is so old-fashioned."

It was Schiaparelli who, in 1935, started the first boutique in Paris; but

her very first fashion sortie was in the mid-twenties, with sweaters. In no time she had all smart women wearing black sweaters with huge white bows where their bosoms would have been in any other decade. She followed this up by putting everyone into stocking caps; and then made it chic, for the first time, to wear tweeds in town. Next there was the trouser-skirt: for travel, town, evening, and sport. Lili D'Alvarez wore one of them at Wimbledon. It did not win her the championship but it secured her place in the Wimbledon legend. Schiaparelli's most lasting influence in fashion was the padded shoulders she introduced in the early 'thirties and which did not go out until after Dior's New Look of 1947; but her most valuable contribution was a sense of nonsense and an uninhibited instinct that fashion should be fun.



Schiaparelli had a couture house in Upper Grosvenor Street, and there her collections included many experiments with new textiles: treebark, Cellophane, straw, glass. She fell in love with London, the most masculine city in the world; but, alas! found that "in

England one has to wait for people to die in order to be paid." Among the pre-war customers of her Paris couture house was Mae West who did not come in person for fittings but sent a plaster cast of herself naked. Then there was Greta Garbo, drinking pink vodka, enraptured by a collection, but ordering a raincoat; and there was Stalin asking Schiaparelli, the individualist, to design a dress for forty million women to wear. She did. She was the first designer to use zip fasteners, tweeds for evening, costume jewellery. She made suits with padlocks, buttons like paperweights, scarves printed like newspapers; she designed a superbly witty bottle, shaped like a dressmaker's Jane, for her *Shocking* scent.

And what now? Stockings. Schiaparelli nylons were the reason for this visit to London: "There is no fashion now." She meant that imagination, initiative, and daring are gone. As she wrote in her autobiography, "Fashion is born by small facts, trends, even politics, never by trying to make little pleats and furbelows, by trinkets, by clothes easy to copy, or by shortening or lengthening the skirt. These last methods may be good from the business angle, but they are a bore." We hope the stockings will be good from the business angle, but fear she will find them a bore. ALISON ADBURGHAM

Outdoor Elegance

THE Joneses' garden do I sing,
Now that they've got it furnished.
It has a Floto hammock-swing,
Air-sprung and Silvaburnished,

A table, Markprufe, sitting tight
In special plastic sockets;
Eight resin-printed Outorlnite
Self-sliding chairs, with pockets;

A Stedditrolley (space for ice),
A siliconed umbrella,
Eleven cushions labelled twice
"Don't Wash" and "Rane-Repella,"

Some Chunkiglass for drinking rough,
Some Pewtaware to sup with—
It has a lot of *ghastly* stuff
I shan't be keeping up with.

ANDE

Bare-Faced Injustice

I HAVE never been one for sex equality and women having equal status with men. I think we women should retain our superiority; and one of the few advantages I envy the weaker sex is that of growing a beard. Though admittedly this advantage is counter-balanced, for those men who like their faces bald, by the painful necessity of shaving at least once a day.

It is a terrific advantage to be able to blot out half of a commonplace or revolting face with a mask which gives an impression of combined sanctity, benevolence and learning, and a handicapped female face has no way of achieving this result.

Imagine a He and a She, both beetle-browed, pig-eyed and with miniature mouths and receding chins. Not a pretty pair. And yet one, by buying an expensive black hat and sheathing the lower half of his face in a scabbard of fuzz, immediately assumes the status of distinguished gentleman.

The other can not so easily become a distinguished lady; and never, poor soul, the gorgeous dame or hot dish which every right-minded girl aspires to be, though she may achieve some of the wistful attractiveness of a gargoye.

If, however, she wishes to look rather more appetizing it will cost her hours of time, an enormous amount of hard work and a fortune spent on cosmetics and visits to various beauty specialists, and at the end of it all the unfortunate woman will still look like an unhappy monkey.

Lest any scientist in search of something to discover might think to solve the problem of women thus underprivileged by inventing a hairgrower for the naked female chin—please, sir, refrain! Instead, pray direct your talents to alleviating this major injustice of sex inequality, and invent a magic lotion which will banish the male beard and put the plain man at an equal disadvantage with the plain woman.

MARY VAUGHAN

☆

"I have been listening to the latest recording of Kathie Kay—and laughing at the publicity surrounding the lady. Miss Kay, who does most of her singing in Scotland, is billed and boosted as the Scottish Fireside Girl."—*Evening Standard*

Got a good lawyer, dear?

Test Match Wife

HUBBY acting funnily these days? Cleaning his shoes the night before, hearing the end of the news, getting sunburnt on a Friday? Then hubby is a cricket lover, and oh dear with these Test Matches that crop up every summer now!

But why not make the best of things and go in for being the Test Match Watcher's ideal helpmeet? It's a fascinating job calling for just that touch of expertise.

Should hubby be getting up early to join the queue, see that his 5 a.m. breakfast is a jolly affair. Chat of the maccs the children need, the Liberals' chances, dry rot, family allowances, anything to keep his mind off that old yesterday's paper and yours off putting the salt in the sandwiches. Be clever with sandwiches. Lots of slidey cucumber, and a big flat floppy packet that fits a briefcase and gets squashed flatter by the Thermos. Is he looking for the field-glasses he bought for the last Test series? Be a sport, lend them even if you do miss a rare garden bird or two. As for the special effort of a clean drip-dry shirt daily in case the TV camera catches him, all that awful nightly cuff-rubbing—what do you mean, special effort?

Have a few looks at the TV during the day, then you can (a) tell him he could have watched better at home, (b) remark acidly on the number of men with time off on a week-day, (c) know when to start the potatoes for supper. It's when you see E. W. Swanton standing alone in the puddles.

If he does watch at home he'll want the homey atmosphere you can only provide by constantly popping in with the odd remark. Suggested remarks:—"The picture's a bit dim, shall I try?" "Lunch! Nice and early and it won't keep hot!" "Come on in children; if you keep quiet Daddy will explain cricket."

Only got the wireless? Two hundred and fifty miles from the Test ground and no evening papers? Then, with the funny old dear so close to the set he can't miss a word, here's your chance to get out the sewing-machine!

Finally, just suppose he spends a Test Match day in the office and rushes home barking "What was the close of play score?" Keep calm. Stick to facts. "Someone had a century on the Third Programme then they all got out. Or the other way round and they got out first."

That's what men mean by the "glorious uncertainty" of the game. Or, come to that, of women.

ANGELA MILNE



"There, I was right—we have got a burglar."

Toby Competitions

No. 20.—All in Favour

COMPETITORS are invited to argue in favour of one of the following: Child labour; transportation of criminals; the Game Laws; the pillory; a property qualification for the franchise. Limit, 150 words.

A prize consisting of a framed *Punch* original, to be selected from all available drawings, is offered for the best entry. Runners-up will receive Toby bookmarks. Entries (any number, but each on a separate piece of paper and accompanied by a separate entry token, cut out from the bottom left-hand corner of this page) by first post on Friday, June 20, to TOBY COMPETITION No. 20, *Punch*, 10 Bouverie Street, London, E.C.4.

Report on Competition No. 17 (Consumers' Guide)

Competitors were invited to write a report from a Consumers' Guidance Organization on hat-guards, chest-protectors, moustache-cups or back-scratchers. The standard of entry was high. The great majority of competitors chose back-scratchers; a few of these entries were unprintable. Some competitors showed obvious signs of having lovingly and maliciously studied the brand of literature they were guying. Although he ought not to have omitted prices, the winner of the framed *Punch* original is:

PETER GARDNER
NEW HOUSE
EASTHAMPTON
KINGSLAND
LEOMINSTER

This was his entry:

Flexigard "Helpmate."—Has rubber-cushioned probes anchored to polish oak back-plate (screws to any vertical surface). Self-aligning to body contours. Safe. Pleasant appearance.***

Flexigard "Backmaster."—Electric power version of "Helpmate." Suitable for Continuous Scratching in the Larger Home or Club. Installation by approved distributors. Quiet. Unobtrusive.****

Diocentric "Attachascratch."—Converts their Sander and Buffer into powerful Backscratcher. Standard equipment includes "Garde-a-torque" clutch and "Depth of Scratch" click adjustment. Also deals with lawn moss and rusty metal casements. Efficient. Noisy.**

Manhattan Salon. "Helen."—Tiny Personal Scratcher. "Lustrafine." Pencil pack with monkey-fur retractable thing. Incorporates Perfume capsule. Fascinates Men.*

Among the runners-up were:

1. *Itchmaster de Luxe* (Tonemod Industries Ltd.). Price: 9 guineas. Ivory claw. Long nylon-coated handle gives relief down to coccyx, and avoids "cold-shock" of metal. Tensile strength—10 tons sq. in. Hanging hole would not fit over British Standard nail head. Recommended.

2. *Scratchex*, Model 58 (Gamfridgegoods Ltd.). Price: 19s. 11d. Angle (non-adjustable) of roughly-finished die-cast claw-points gives satisfaction on downstroke but may cause skin laceration on upstroke. Tensile strength—10 tons sq. in. Not recommended.

3. *Combined Backscratcher/Insect Swatter.* (Home Bargain Sales Ltd.).

Price: 1s. 4d. Utility instrument in polythene. Liable to buckle if boiled in toluene. Three blows each of 0.265 ft. lb. force sufficient to kill bluebottles. Tensile strength—0.1 tons sq. in. Recommended.

* *Best Buy.*—Combined Backscratcher/Swatter.—W. J. Grant, 16 Harrington Road, London, E.11

Seven hat-guards were tested to destruction: five of silk cord, one mohair (resembling bootlace) and one elastic. The elastic guard had a boomerang effect, sometimes painful. All guards had toothed grips for attaching to the hat and one was powerful enough to "bite" pieces out of the brim, but the serrated effect was not unattractive. It was found that if one end of the guard is not attached to the person, the guard tends to blow away with the hat. This difficulty was not dealt with in any of the instructions, but it is understood this will be remedied.—F. H. E. Townshend-Rose, 111 Thornbury Road, Osterley

WHEREFORE reports on:

Artiproductions "Sympathizer" (18/6d.). Hickory shaft—sturdy willow handle—comfortable and effective. Criticism—handle shaped for right-hand grip only, rendering probes in right lumbar region ineffectual.

Manganiron "Inscrutable" (29/11d.). Manganese-tipped wrought-iron—cork handle—shaft adjustable—converts easily to toasting-fork. Elderly will find fifty-one ounces too heavy for long sessions. Recommended.

Mercury (£5 19s. 6d.).—Three-speed leather-upholstered electric model. Rheostatic gouge-depth control. Attachments—swizzle stick and tobacco decarcinogenizer (Manufacturer's untested claim). Did not pass "submersion" test—dangerous if used under water.

In October WHEREFORE will review petrol-engined export models (when overseas investigations completed).—K. HILLIER, Wellard House, Dukes Wood Drive, Gerrards Cross

The Kosikup is made of plastic material and the Dumfries is a traditional china cup.

Imbibing tests were carried out, using seven different types of false moustache, and both cups were found to be safe and hygienic. In forty-nine out of fifty tests the Kosikup produced an unpleasant sucking noise, and it must be concluded that the design is defective. When dropped from a height into a stone sink the Dumfries broke into fifteen pieces, while the Kosikup remained intact.

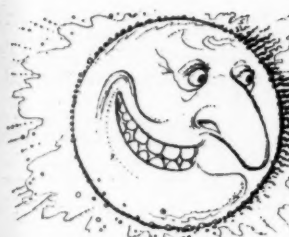
The Kosikup is a strong and durable moustache-cup, but it is unlikely to supersede the traditional Dumfries type.—W. M. WHEELER, Rosemary, Promenade de Verdun, Purley

The other runners-up, who will also receive *Punch* bookmarks, are:

G. F. Barnes, 153, Borough High Street, London, S.E.1; Mrs. Molly Colgan, 2, Severn Road, Clacton-on-Sea; M. Hutchins, 34, Wilton Road, Salisbury; J. E. M. Moxley, "Crocketts," Lee Common, Great Missenden; Dr. N. P. R. Sherry, 11, Parkside Gardens, Beeston, Notts.



SILKS



CRITICISM



BOOKING OFFICE

Swedish Punch

Three Plays by August Strindberg: *The Father—Miss Julia—Easter*. Translated by Peter Watts. Penguin, 3/6

STRINDBERG—in whom Sweden can claim a writer of the first rank—has stood up well as a playwright. His autobiographical novels, enjoyable as they are, could not be described as widely read to-day; nor would it be easy to find anyone in this country versed in his poetry and treatises on chemistry. His plays, on the other hand, get performed fairly regularly, if too infrequently. Here we have his three best known ones in a new and lively translation by Mr. Peter Watts.

Johan August Strindberg (1849–1912) was the fourth child of a Stockholm business-man of goodish family, who married his servant-girl-mistress four months before the writer was born. Strindberg adored his mother, who died when he was thirteen, but he never managed to achieve his ambition of becoming her favourite child. His father, remarried to his young housekeeper within a year, thereby added a wicked-stepmother predicament to what seems already to have been a sufficiently uneasy psychological situation.

Strindberg himself was, therefore, not only a classical case of a person who had had to contend with difficult adjustments in childhood calculated, in the eyes of modern psychology, to have an ominous effect on development, but he also possessed an extraordinary power of identifying his own troubles of this kind. Indeed his powerful and ruthless observation of human behaviour—and especially the behaviour of women—is astonishing when it is remembered that the principles of psychoanalysis to-day very generally, for better or worse, accepted, were still unvoiced at the time of his earlier writings.

The relationship with his mother and stepmother left him chronically at odds with the opposite sex. He was married three times (Finnish, Austrian, Norwegian), and there can be no doubt that

he was attractive to women. However, this factor in his life was a martyrdom to him. Again and again he returns in his works to the predatory female as the root of all evil.

The Father (1887) contains the elements of this preoccupation. The middle-aged, unsuccessful captain lives in a small house with his wife, daughter, mother-in-law and old nanny. This is—as we may well understand—too much for him. What with rows about how the daughter shall be educated, and the suggestion that she is, in any case, probably not his own child, he throws the reading lamp at his wife. The end of it is he is lured into a straitwaistcoat by the old nurse...

All this is both terrifying and convincing, not the less because the captain's own neuroticism is made plain, so that one cannot for a moment feel that his life would have been much

more successful, even if the women had left him alone.

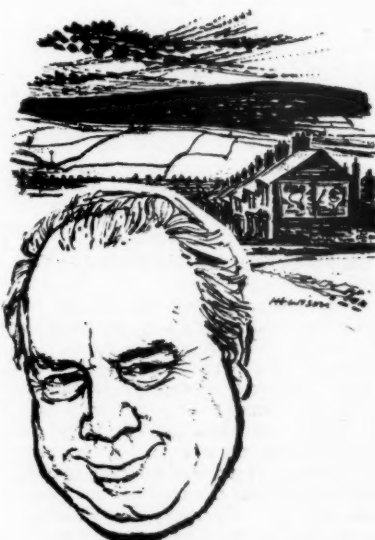
In *Miss Julia* (1888) we have Woman at it again; this time on a rather different tack. Miss Julia is the Count's only daughter, who insists upon the valet making love to her. Finally, there seems no alternative but that she should cut her throat. There is nothing against the situation, and the valet is excellent, but Miss Julia herself never quite comes off. Without denying for a moment that there were, perhaps still are, plenty of aristocratic young ladies who might behave like that, Strindberg never manages to convince us that Miss Julia is indeed aristocratic. The doubts about her being her father's daughter arise again, as in *The Father*; while her mother's supposed arson somewhat complicates the issue. All the same, the drama of the action must be admitted to be effective.

Easter (1901) is a morality play. As Mr. Watts remarks, its background of creditors and bailiffs no doubt pictures much of Strindberg's own uncomfortable childhood, when his father's bankruptcy made such things only too familiar.

An aspect of Strindberg's life of which he was himself keenly conscious was the way in which coincidence seemed to crop up in all his circumstances with an almost magical frequency. He was perpetually involved with the same houses, the same names, the same numbers. This awareness of life's inexplicable patterns is reflected in all his writings, and takes an important part in the blend of mysticism and scientific interest which went to form his philosophy. His third wife survived into the 'twenties to run a night-club in Endell Street, Covent Garden.

ANTHONY POWELL

NOVEL FACES



XX—J. B. PRIESTLEY

In homely tones progress the Priestley tales, Like Good Companions tramping Yorkshire dales.

Turkish Romance

The Isle of Princes. Hasan Ozbekhan. Gollancz, 15/-

This novel of modern Turkey is written in the western tradition but its oriental locale is brilliantly conveyed. Anyone who knows Istanbul and has sailed among the neighbouring islands

will regain in it the poetic beauty of that region. The isle of the title, on which the author spent his youth, is here portrayed as the last retreat of the old order that came to an end with Kemal Ataturk. Here Yusef Pasha has retired with his family to keep up a way of life forgotten on the mainland. He is lord of the island, but money is running out. Only the old man's prestige keeps his household together, and his grandsons know that when their lord dies they must face the brutal realities of Istanbul. With them on the island are two lovely girls to whom Yusef has given a home. Davud and the elder, Belkis, are in love, but the boys, untrained and unsuited for a business career in Istanbul, plan to escape to fight in the Spanish Civil War. We are not told on which side they will enlist. Yusef dies and the dream-life of the island ends. The younger girl takes refuge in a brothel. Learning that Davud is deserting her, Belkis commits suicide. The boys set out, hearing in the noise of the ship's engines "the noise of life, the noise of fate, the helpless roaring of the dooms."

The main characters are less individuals than romantic aspects of youth and aristocratic incapacity, but the story is told with energy and directness.

O. M.

Fowlers End. Gerald Kersh. Heinemann, 16/-

Admirers of Gerald Kersh will be reassured to learn that their favourite author has forsaken his recent science-fantasy period to return to the mood which engendered *Night and the City* and *The Song of the Flea*: as an essay in pure bravura, this new novel is worthy to rank with either of these. The scene is Kersh's special version of London (a city as colourful as Baghdad, capable of yielding as many tales as *The Arabian Nights*), in which the young narrator, flat broke (or "hearts of oak," as the glossary has it), is given a job as an East

End cinema manager on the strength of his formidably ugly face. The owner and operator alone are characters whose idiosyncrasies would be sufficient to sustain a novel by a writer less fertile in invention: the reader must be left to discover for himself what sequence of hilarious misadventures leads to the narrator's final embarkation on a sort of hell-ship, under the alias of Frank Mudd, trimmer. Compare this book, for sheer exuberance, with the pumped-up vitality of younger and more fashionable novelists: the result will be a revelation.

J. M-R.

The Railway Magazine Miscellany, 1897-1919. Edited by Henry Maxwell. Allen and Unwin, 30/-

The Railroad Passenger Car. August Mencken. John Hopkins Press: Oxford University Press, 40/-

The Railway Magazine Miscellany deals with the railways of Britain, before the grouping system had put an end to the intense individuality which gave them so much of their charm. As well as technicalities, everyday life and political trends were reflected in its columns. Indeed in 1889 a "Pertinent Paragraph" suggests that free beer would be as much in the range of a "practical Parliamentary programme" as nationalizing the railways. Among many excellent illustrations is a delightful Beardsley-esque poster, advertising Bexhill (L.B. & S.C. Rly.) drawn by W. Gunn Gannet. Menus are included, and from the passengers' demeanour in the picture "Funny Story after Lunch in the Theatrical Special," the cuisine was as good as the meals were profuse.

In *The Railroad Passenger Car* every vicissitude of the passenger on early American railways is examined, and either charmingly or horrifyingly illustrated. A collision in Pennsylvania, with the engine's smoke-stack flying through the air, is balanced by dinner at sixty miles an hour, with champagne. Some of the extracts are written by English travellers, one of whom displays a rather craven addiction to the idea that to travel safely is better than to arrive.

V. P.

The Lady and the Cut-Throat. Tom Hopkinson. Cape, 15/-

The standard of the short story has risen high and there seems no place for the less ambitious entertainment. In consequence, Mr. Hopkinson's new collection is likely to arouse criticism that would never have been roused by a novel of roughly the same grade. These are unpretentious tales of love or business that vary very much in ambition, like the magazines and newspapers to which acknowledgment is made. Some of them are not worth reprinting; but presumably Mr. Hopkinson wanted to publish the better items and had to pad the volume out.

The political passion which once gave strength to his fiction seems to have died

down and not been replaced by anything, even excitement with his own characters and settings. "Woman is a Gilded Snare" is a neatish example of the older type of short story. Parts of "On the Tree Top" are inept, but parts are so good that it makes much of the rest of the book seem a depressing waste of talent. Mr. Hopkinson needs new wind in his sails: perhaps by now he has found it.

R. G. G. P.

Letters of John Cowper Powys to Louis Wilkinson, 1935-1956. Edited and with a preface by Louis Wilkinson. Macdonald, 30/-

Twenty-two years ago, under his pen-name, Mr. Louis Wilkinson published *Welsh Ambassadors*, a comprehensive account of John Cowper Powys and his family; now he gives us the vivacious and substantial sequel. It is unusual to publish letters during the writer's lifetime, but when the writer is a distinguished author we may indeed be grateful for this insight into the spontaneous workings of his mind. And this collection of three hundred letters, addressed over twenty-one years to an intimate friend, is nothing if not spontaneous. "For pure absolute freedom to say anything that comes into my head, you are the only one I can do it to," so Mr. Powys told Mr. Wilkinson. And here, with an almost Dylan Thomas ebullience, he touches on every topic from wine to Andromeda and the Dragon, from Aleister Crowley to Rabelais, from the Abdication to "this here top-notch IIIrd Programme of the B.B.C." "Yes," he writes, "I am so intensely volatile and airy that I am like a sea-anemone with the wings of a gnat and the tail-feathers of a swallow." He has given us a volatile yet enlightening correspondence.

J. R.

Someone from the Past. Margot Bennett. Eyre and Spottiswoode, 12/6

Rapid-moving story of Neo-Bohemian murder—but one beat removed from a "straight" novel—told with unrelenting wit by a delicious heroine, whose sideline aphorisms about love and human nature in general are perhaps a shade too nostalgically wise for the age she's supposed to be: "It takes a solid foundation of romanticism to build a good cynic." Mrs. Bennett shares with Miss Christianna Brand the ability to spin a complex web of suspicion and distrust from the passions of credible and sympathetic personæ: here even Sarah, outwardly an ambitious and heartless destroyer of men, who finally falls victim to a bullet fired by one of her four former-lovers, is shown in the adroitly-managed flashbacks to be a very human and almost likeable figure, while the murderer himself forfeits our sympathy only by attempting to kill the heroine when she has uncovered his guilt. Excellent bed-sitter backgrounds and much sly undermining of the pseudo-intellectual, e.g. when the heroine claims, as an alibi, that she was reading



a book called *Genet v. Ionesco* in Hatchard's—only to find, against all likelihood, that the book *had actually been sold* the day before. J. M.-R.

AT THE PLAY

Hamlet (STRATFORD-ON-AVON)
Speaking of Murder (ST. MARTIN'S)

AT Stratford Michael Redgrave's latest *Hamlet* is first of all immensely natural. For the steady declamation of the great speeches, giving them their complete measure as poetry, he substitutes a method which is a truer index to *Hamlet's* immediate feelings. One has often found it unlikely that a sensitive man suffering mental torture should break into a smooth flow of perfectly balanced verse, and Mr. Redgrave's delivery broken by sudden spasms of emotion and sometimes throwing away whole lines in an anguished whisper, is much closer to human behaviour. This interpretation gains greatly in intelligence—one gets the impression that Mr. Redgrave has not only understood the part in detail but has worked out every movement and inflection with the utmost care—but it loses in the power to mesmerize us out of ourselves. We are constantly interested by this unusually sensible and straightforward *Hamlet*, but we are seldom lost. Although of course he speaks beautifully, the full lift of the verse is missing.

Glen Byam Shaw's production is to be praised for its steady drive and loyalty to Shakespeare. Close attention to character is matched by a blessed absence of tricks: the slap given by Claudius in his first moment of wild alarm to the Player King is a reasonable innovation, and *Hamlet's* whispered soliloquy behind the praying Claudius meets a feeling we have often had that, however deep in confession, any uncle would be pulled up by a nephew thundering revenge into the back of his neck.

Dorothy Tutin's Ophelia is much her best performance this season. Sane, she treats *Hamlet* with affecting dignity; mad, she seems really so. The Polonius is also good, Cyril Luckham making him



Ophelia—DOROTHY TUTIN

Hamlet—MICHAEL REDGRAVE

to Shakespeare and subdues her comic gift stoutly except, with excellent effect, in the first scene with Rosencrantz and Guildenstern. Edward Woodward's Laertes and Ron Haddrick's Horatio are both good, and Anthony Nicholls' Ghost is the best I have ever seen. Imperial and terrifying, it is also quite free from the bronchial asthma which so many producers seem convinced must be a necessary disadvantage of the after-life. The stage is left admirably clear by Motley, who have decorated it simply with lofty pillars and with curtains and arch-dual emblems that fall into position as needed.

Speaking of Murder, by Audrey and William Roos, revolves round a man-sized safe which an eccentric grandfather has left in the hall of a country house, and a woman's insane jealousy of the new wife of a widower whose children she has been looking after. All the cards are slammed on the table. Pretty soon we know that the charming Annabelle, so much loved by all, is carefully working up suspicion against her host's small son, and that for his wife she is planning the same death by suffocation in the airtight safe that already she has tried out on the dog. The weakness of the play is that to an almost embarrassing degree Annabelle continues to act as the mistress of the house, an impertinence only mildly resented by the patient wife and not noticed by her husband at all. He is thus made to appear, I should have thought unnecessarily, a fool.

But in spite of this there is a very

honest tension, which the authors know how to tighten at the right moments. Annabelle throws her plan into gear, and as gradually it goes wrong excitement mounts surely. The success of the evening is due largely to the precision with which Maxine Audley paints her public and private faces. This is a very able piece of acting. Although the other parts are much less exacting, there is a ripe gin-propelled old blackmailer by Joyce Carey, and useful performances by Jan Holden as the film-star, Robert Urquhart as the husband and James Ray as the unhappy small boy. Not to mention the Corgi who behaves impeccably until the combination lock is too much for him.

Recommended

(Dates in brackets refer to *Punch* reviews)

A Touch of the Sun (Princes—12/2/58). N. C. Hunter's study of a schoolmaster. *Flowering Cherry* (Haymarket—27/11/57) death of a salesman. *Any Other Business* (Westminster—16/4/58), exciting board-room drama. ERIC KEOWN

AT THE PICTURES

The Key

IT's odd and saddening to think how many people are already telling each other that *The Key* (Director: Carol Reed) is "about" the men of the tugs in the *Salvage Service* during the war, as if it were just another pedestrian story with type-characters manipulated to display the work of some branch of the services, just another worthy war film designed to cash in on the easy public

REP SELECTION

Queen's Theatre, Hornchurch, *Odd Man In*, to June 21st.
Playhouse, Sheffield, *Subway in the Sky*, to June 21st.
Dundee, *Towards Zero*, to June 14th.
Northampton, *Doctor Jo*, to June 14th.

fussy but not farcical. I can very seldom believe in Claudius, whose patience with Polonius and kindness to Ophelia clash so heavily with his crimes; Mark Dignam cannot help but appear benevolent, but at least his Claudius is a man of action. To say that Google Withers is much too young a Gertrude in relation to Mr. Redgrave's *Hamlet* (this makes a slight nonsense of the bedroom scene) is no dispraise of Miss Withers, who takes well

that believes the subject is the only thing that counts. I have even seen this view of the film stated in print, with the suggestion that it fails in so far as it is not exclusively devoted to this subject, and the schoolmasterish criticism that it is quite good but would have done better not to bother so much with the private lives of its characters.

I think anyone who can say this is misguided and imperceptive. Here is essentially a story about individual human beings under the enormous stresses of fear, love, loneliness, exhaustion—fear above all. The scenes of violent action are brilliantly done, but watching them one thinks—when one has time to think—not of what appalling ordeals the men of this service had to go through but of what the two or three central characters in this story are going through, and what effect it is having on them.

The really central character, the focus of the story, is the girl Stella (the film is based on Jan de Hartog's novel *Stella*), played by Sophia Loren. She is a refugee living in a flat in "Westport," which is somewhere like wartime Plymouth. She was to have married the skipper of one of the tugs, and he was killed; another took his place in her flat, if not in her heart, and he was killed; when the film begins it is a third, Chris (Trevor Howard), who has "the key" and comes to her when ashore to forget his almost unendurable job.

We are shown the strain he lives under as he shows it to a new arrival, David (William Holden), who is to take command of a tug himself. The suspense in the signals room ashore as the messages

come in from the crippled ship, the assignment of the job, the air attack as the burning ship is found, the dangerous approach, the roaring confusion of the rescue—and then the reaction, as uncontrollable physical tremors hit the men afterwards; all these are balanced, to make the episode a demonstration and an explanation of the overpowering need for escape. Nearly all the men rely on sleeping pills, many of them drink too much, Chris has "the key" . . .

Which he passes on to David before being killed himself. The point is that at first David is outraged by Stella's apparent indifference to the memory of the other men she had loved: he sees a bitter significance in a tattooist's sign in the town—"Names and Hearts Removed Without a Trace." But then the fearsome job has its effect on him, too. He accepts her love, uses the key, passes it on in his turn.

And meanwhile her strange, compassionate character has emerged in talk with him: she tells a revealing story about her childhood, when on a lake in her native Swiss-border country she floated a little box containing a love-note, hoping that somebody, anybody, would float it back with a reply. Earlier Chris has tried to explain to him also how he feels that for her in some obscure way "We're all the same man" . . .

Any attempt to summarize the story like this invites derision. The film can't be simplified into a few words; all its details are important. I have mentioned only one of the superb action episodes, and there are whole areas and aspects of it including scenes in the town and the dingy hotel where David is first billeted,

and on the tug when he deliberately sets out to impress his new crew, and the splendidly managed ones concerned with premonition, that there is barely room to hint at. There are excellent minor characters too, notably Oscar Homolka as another skipper, a grim, methodical, philosophizing man with affection only for his budgerigar.

I'm sure that under this director, and with this (Carl Foreman) script, Miss Loren does better than she has ever had a chance to do before, and Mr. Howard is first-rate as Chris. David is a less striking figure, used mainly as the "eye" or observer of the situation, and Mr. Holden has less opportunity to individualize him. But as a whole the picture is outstandingly good, stimulating to the mind as well as continuously absorbing.

* * * * *

Survey

(Dates in brackets refer to *Punch* reviews)

Other big ones are coming up, but in London there seems not very much left to mention. *The Long Hot Summer* (4/6/58) has excellent things but is marred by a contrived "happy ending." The Canadian *A Dangerous Age* (21/5/58), Fellini's *Cabiria* (16/4/58) and *Around the World in Eighty Days* (17/7/57) continue, and perhaps you can still find the light-hearted Western *The Sheepman* (14/5/58).

Releases are very thin indeed; there is only one that I can recall enjoying, and that a reissue—*The Girl Can't Help It* (14/2/57).

RICHARD MALLETT

AT THE OPERA

Falstaff—Alceste (GLYNDEBOURNE)
Tristan und Isolde (COVENT GARDEN)

HAVING been in the Glyndebourne repertory for three years, *Falstaff*, which Vittorio Gui conducted with fatherly gusto and craft on the opening night of the season, is now precisely *au point*. The struggle henceforth will be to prevent a strikingly unified, mellow and funny production from sliding downhill to staleness.

Geraint Evans's second go at Falstaff betters his excellent first. He gives the old tun a touch of giggling corruptness, as well as the white moustaches and grin of Sir Edward Elgar, o.m. One gathers, too, that his rages (e.g. at Bardolfo and Pistola in the Honour monologue) are not real rages in the least but simulated and serio-comic, a new facet of the man's inborn buffoonery. This is Italianate and therefore right as rain. The Falstaff we see and watch at Glyndebourne is not Shakespeare but, largely, Arrigo Boito.

Everybody else on the stage has some considerable and uncommon asset as singer or actor or both. It is nights such as these that make the cost (say six pounds a head) and trouble (Victoria Station in full fig soon after lunch) of a typical Glyndebourne trip small cost and



[The Key

Lt.-Cmdr. Chris Ford, R.N.R.—TREVOR HOWARD

no trouble at all. I see the Good Taste Gang are saying that Carl Ebert badly over-produces this *Falstaff*. From such a source this is a pretty compliment.

On *Alceste* my verdict is alack and alas. Feelings, admittedly, were mixed. At the finish a man who had waited interminably outside the theatre's call-box while I telephoned a piece to Fleet Street, replied smilingly when I thanked him for being patient, "It's easy to be angelic after so marvellous a performance." Two minutes later, on the other hand, I heard a young man at the crush room bar complain "This has finished Glyndebourne for me. I like music. But there wasn't anything even worth looking at."

Taking the last point first, how right the young man was. Being Greek mythology, the *Alcestis* legend offered Hugh Casson the complete menu of Greek architectural orders from Doric sideways and downward. His prim pencil has rejected the lot. Palace, temple and hell are reduced to a concatenation of lift shafts and concrete lined sumps. This, I protest, is not art but a gelding of it. At first glance the massive, maimed Apollo statue in the oracle scene looks pretty momentous. Then the lights come on, and it turns out to be sculpture of the advanced article-de-luxe, shop-window-dressing school.

Consuelo Rubio (name part) sang her way into and out of Hades with a bright, tireless and steel-edged soprano. The Furies who made a pass at her rose up like a mob of crawling, smothering slugs—a telling production touch. The Admetus looked like a shifty king from a pack of cards; everybody knows that Richard Lewis (who sang politely) would never, in real life, grow a beard like that. The High Priest was Robert Massard from Paris. His baritone made my ears ring. I have never heard anything louder or, in its way, half as perfect. M. Massard is a musician down to the last demi-semiquaver and a complete master of classical declamation.

Gluck's music, all pi and pomp, had me forlornly buttonholing acquaintances during the intervals. "Is this," I asked them, "really the sort of stuff that sent young Berlioz into trembling fits and cold sweats of ecstasy?" Everybody assured me that that was so. Puzzling. Perhaps Berlioz, born *farceur*, was kidding? Could be.

The new *Tristan* strips Covent Garden of the halo won by Don Carlos and puts her back in the doghouse. Bayreuth-flavoured sets on the tilted saucer principle are already as stale as South Bankery. What little voice Ramon Vinay had was often obliterated by Rafael Kubelik's way of suddenly letting fly with the orchestra. In middle register, Sylvia Fisher gives more golden tone than any other post-war Isolde I have heard, but is insecure or nugatory in

other ways. Altogether a queasy, tedious five hours. The gallery booed selectively. I cannot blame them. CHARLES REID

ON THE AIR

Top Show

DURING the week ending May 18, 1958, "The Army Game" (Granada) headed the Top Ten programmes according to the T.A.M. Ratings. Without going into too many sordid details this can be taken to mean that "The Army Game" was watched in more homes on the night in question (4,127,000, if you must know—just 223,000 more than the runner-up, "Take Your Pick") than any other TV programme. Upon receipt of these monstrous statistics I hopefully asked myself the question: Can this mean that "The Army Game" has improved since last I switched it off in mid-cliché? I have now studied the programme again, and I must report, with the deepest regret, that the *status quo* is being preserved. The only thing the T.A.M. Ratings proved was that the great mass of viewers have a sluggish taste in humour, and we knew that already.

I don't want to seem superior about this. I'm as ready as the next ex-Serviceman to laugh at comic fantasy about life in the British Army. I have guffawed many times at music-hall sketches involving no more than the dropping of rifles and the misinterpretation of drill orders, and the film of *Private's Progress* gave me a great deal of pleasure. But there is an important difference here. Those sketches—or the best of them—were performed by comics to whom the timing of knockabout was almost second nature; and *Private's Progress* was made from a book by a fresh and lively writer, who got his fun from cunning exaggeration, a quick eye for character, one of the shrewdest ears for casual speech in the business, and direct personal experience artistically distilled. With "The Army Game," however, we are back in the flabby realms of *Reluctant Heroes*. Without the schoolboy dirt, I grant you—but oh, what a sorry, creaking, Comic-Cuts-type charade it all is! William Hartnell, who has been snarling most realistically as a W.O. for as long as I can remember, plays the only character for whom I can feel the slightest sympathy, for these slapdash proceedings arouse feelings in me which verge on the sadistic. As for Mr. Bass, that subtle and delicate droll, I fear his art is being blunted in Hut 29. Are we to say of "The Army Game," in years to come, "That's what became of Alfie Bass"? I hope not. Meanwhile, weekly laughter in 4,127,000 happy homes. And the strange, sad truth remains that if the show were any better than it is, those homes would still be happy, watching it.

"About Religion" (ATV) sometimes



WILLIAM HARTNELL BERNARD BRESSLAU

provides an agreeably solemn Sunday half-hour. A couple of Sundays ago I watched with great interest a filmed account of a pilgrimage to Lourdes, and was once again struck by the poor quality of the singing of lay Christians. No doubt I should have been struck by something more mystical than this, but I found Father Michael Hollings's commentary uninspiring. The fault was mine, perhaps: there is such a lot to be said about the awful mystery of a Lourdes pilgrimage, and I expected too much. The pictures by themselves, however, told me a good deal, of suffering and faith and resignation, and that was as it should be. For television is pictures.

Granada's "Under Fire" deserves its extension to half an hour a week, despite its brashness. A foreigner watching some of these slanging-matches, in which homespun rhetoricians refuse to take either Yes or No for an answer, might get the impression that the people of Lancashire, tired of being cruelly diddled by a crowd of posh, cunning London chaps, are on the point of declaring themselves a republic and setting fire to the Prime Minister. But we English know that it's just a case of current frustrations and misunderstandings being aired (rather like letters to the press signed "DISGUSTED") and suave explanations or excuses being given. It may be uncouth, but it's alive and it's fairly unpredictable: and that, on the little screen, is something.

HENRY TURTON

Continuing

A. J. WENTWORTH, B.A. (Retd.)

A Misunderstanding at the Greengrocer's

By H. F. ELLIS

I AM not at all sure that time is really saved by this modern habit of abbreviation. The longest way round is often the shortest way home, as my old nurse never tired of telling me. She is dead now of course, but the principle of the thing remains. "Just you put one leg in at a time, Master Arthur," she used to say. "Then we shan't have you toppling over backwards into all that Plasticine." She had a fund of wisdom, rest her soul, and the world would be a better place if there were more of her like about to-day.

Her words came back to me at the greengrocer's this morning. I mean about the shortest way home, naturally—not the other. At my age one doesn't topple over backwards at the greengrocer's or anywhere else; or at least,

if one does (and the truth is, whatever Miss Edge might say, that the place was abominably crowded and I for one would rather step a little too close to the carrot rack than inconvenience a lady any day), the reasons are different. What made me think of my old nurse was this silly trick of saying "three" instead of "three pence" or "three-pennyworth." Surely we are not all in such a rush to get wherever we are going that we have time only for monosyllables? The result in any case is to waste time as often as not, as happened this morning when I said I wanted some brussels sprouts and asked the price.

"Ten," the man said.

I naturally supposed he was inquiring how many I wanted and told him it was just for myself, to go with a chop, and thought perhaps eight would do, if they were large ones. When I am more used to shopping for myself I shall know in a flash, but at present I am rather feeling my way.

He is one of those sandy-haired young men, always trying to do six things at once. "Not up there, Fred," he shouted. "They're under the caulies. What did you want, then?"

"About eight, I think," I began, but broke off because he was telling a lady that the lettuces she was fingering were fresh in to-day. Then he took fourpence from a thrustful woman who came up with a lemon, and began to shovel up vast quantities of sprouts in a scoop.

"Got a sack?" he asked me.

"Good heavens!" I said. "Are those for me? All I wanted—"

"Make up your mind," he said.

"Eight pound, you said. If it's for Mrs. Odding," he added, speaking over his shoulder to a girl in a white overall, "she has the Cos."

I began to lose patience with these constant unmannerly interpolations. "I do not care tuppence, young man," I said warmly, "whether Mrs. Odding has the Cos—or the 'flu either, for that matter. All I want is a little civility, and some sprouts."

One of those odd silences fell over the shop while I was speaking, and it may be that a sudden consciousness that heads were turning in my direction put me momentarily off my guard. At any rate, in making way for a woman who came bustling past me with a push-chair I took an incautious pace backwards and fouled the carrot rack. It is absurd to have such an insecure structure in a busy shop. After all, one can move about perfectly freely in a fishmonger's without bringing a hundredweight of haddock about one's ears; or in a hat shop or chemist's for that matter, *mutatis mutandis*, now that they no longer pile up sponges and loofahs in inadequate wire baskets.



"Did you have to make them all gin flavoured?"

There ought to be more consideration and common sense. Ironmongers hang their surplus shovels and brooms and so on from the ceiling, and though that might not do in every case, it shows what can be achieved by the exercise of a little imagination. At Burgrove Preparatory School the boys' bowler hats (for travelling, etc.) used to be kept piled up on a shelf at elbow level, but soon after my arrival there as Assistant Mathematical Master they were moved to a high cupboard out of reach—another case in point.

Everybody was very kind and helpful, but in the end I left without buying any sprouts and went, almost directly, to Gooch's for tobacco. He also sells walking-sticks, though I don't quite see the connection. Something to do with the open air perhaps, unless briar was once used for both—I mean for pipes as well as for walking-sticks, or rather the other way round. But that hardly seems likely.

Miss Edge was in Gooch's and shook her finger at me in a way I do not much admire.

"What's this I hear about your pelting Mrs. Odding with carrots, Mr. Wentworth?" she said immediately.

The speed with which gossip, and highly inaccurate gossip at that, flies about a small place like Fenport still astonishes me, though I have been here six months or more now and ought to be finding my feet. It was bad enough in a Common Room, but here!

"Pelting Mrs. Odding!" I cried, hardly able to believe my ears. "Why, I—"

"With carrots," she repeated, nodding. "Over at Wrightson's. And calling her names, by all accounts. I didn't even know you knew her."

"I do not," I replied, colouring up. "What is more, Miss Edge, sorry as I am to scotch so succulent a snake at birth, she was not even in the shop at the time. I merely—"

"Oh, Mr. Wentworth!" she said. "Behind her back! That *was* naughty."

"One does not pelt people with carrots behind their backs," I began heatedly; but noticing that Mrs. French and her little boy had entered the shop and seemed to be listening I broke off and asked for an ounce of Richmond Curly Cut.

"Five," the girl said.

"No, one," I corrected her.

"Five shillings," said Old Gooch, intervening. "Just gone up."

Five shillings! And I can remember when it was sevenpence. Still, there it is. One must move with the times or go under, as happened to a poor old friend of mine when haircuts went up to one-and-six. After all, it is cheaper to have one's teeth out now than it was in the old days, so that one thing balances another up to a point.

Miss Edge was nowhere to be seen when I turned to continue our conversation, and I made my way home in a thoughtful frame of mind. It is idle to concern oneself overmuch with the small contretemps of every day; gossipmongers will make mountains out of molehills, do what one will. None the less it distressed me to think that this Mrs. Odding might be led to believe that I had spoken rudely about her, if (as was more than probable) some garbled version of the incident were to reach her ears. It would be better, I decided—rightly, I still think—to ring the lady up and explain the whole thing quite simply, before Miss Edge or anybody else had a chance to upset her with ill-natured tittle-tattle. But of course that meant that I must waste no time at all.

There is only one Odding in the book—it is an unusual name, I think—so there was no difficulty about that.

"Odding here," said a man's voice, when I got through.

"I have just come from the greengrocer's," I explained, "—that is, I wonder, could I speak to Mrs. Odding, please?"

"For you," I heard him say. "Chap from the greengrocer's. Got a mouthful of potatoes to get rid of, by the sound of it."

If a lifetime's schoolmastering has taught me nothing else (as it certainly has), I have at least learned to disregard



MAHOOD

"Registered."

trivial rudenesses. Of course, in this instance I was no doubt not intended to overhear what was said, but I could not help wondering whether Mr. Odding has ever paused to consider what his own voice may sound like when distorted by the telephone.

"Yais? What then? Mrs. Odding spiks," another voice said.

"Oh Mrs. Odding," I said—with rather a sinking heart, to tell the truth—"I am sorry to trouble you, but I just wanted to clear up a small matter, a silly little incident at the green—"

"Is arrived," Mrs. Odding said. "He is come O.K. Beets and all."

"Yes, yes," I said. "This is another matter. I happened to be in Wrightson's this afternoon when one of the assistants—"

"Is right?"

"Wrightson's, Mrs. Odding. With a W, you know. One of the assistants, the sandy-haired one actually, mentioned that you preferred the Cos, the lettuce, you understand—"

"Alwais," she said firmly. "Never the other. It is becoss of the wind."

"I see. Well—"

"Up she comes, else. With Cos, no. If he is not Cos, back she goes. You know me?"

"No, Mrs. Odding," I said. "That is what I wanted to explain." I did not, as a matter of fact, want to do anything of the kind. I am not in any sense a Little Englander: some of my best friends are Balts and Slovenes and so on; and I am well aware of the importance of reaching a close understanding with people who have not had the same advantages as we have—or perhaps one ought not to say the same kind of advantages, to avoid the risk of misunderstanding. But, really! When it comes to clearing up a silly little affair in a greengrocer's one would rather have to do with one's own kidney.

"Mrs. Odding," I went on, speaking slowly and distinctly, "I simply rang up to ask you to take no notice of any stupid stories you may hear about a trifling incident in the greengrocer's this afternoon. When I tell you that people are already going about saying that I pelted you with carrots, Mrs. Odding, at a time when, as you and I know perfectly well—"

"Here, I've had about enough of this," said Mr. Odding's voice. "Who the devil are you? And what do you mean by trying to frighten my wife with a lot of damn balderdash about carrots? Ringing up in the middle of

tea and scaring a woman out of her wits after all she's been through these last months—"

I allow no one to take that tone with me, least of all when I am attempting to make an apology.

"My name is Wentworth," I said coldly, "and I would have you know that—"

"Aha!" he said. "So *that's* it." And rang off.

Two minutes later the phone rang again, and I supposed it would be this man Odding, come to his senses and anxious to explain himself. But it turned out to be Harcutt, a solicitor whom I have met once or twice at the library and so on.

"I say, Wentworth," he said, "speaking as a friend, is it true you called Miss Edge a succulent snake at the chemists this afternoon?"

One really has no patience with this kind of folly.

"If you are thinking of joining the Old Women's Scandalmongering Society, Harcutt," I suggested, "you had better try to get *some* of your facts right. In the first place, Miss Edge and I met not at the chemist's but at Gooch's."

"That certainly alters the situation," he said.

"And secondly, I called her no such thing. I should have thought you knew me well enough by this time. The

amount of petty gossip and trouble-making that goes on in this place—"

"Well, keep your hair on, Wentworth," he said—an expression I have always disliked. "I was only joking."

"And while we are about it," I told him, "here is a further bit of information. I did not throw carrots at Mrs. Odding in the greengrocer's either."

"You didn't?"

"No."

"Then why mention it?"

"Because I have no doubt that it is all over the village by now."

"Wait a minute, Wentworth," he said. "Are you suggesting that things have reached such a pitch that the fact that you *didn't* throw carrots at somebody is red-hot news?"

"Oh, go and boil yourself, Harcutt," I said. He is a good chap in many ways, but I was not in the mood for that kind of schoolboy facetiousness. All this fuss over buying a few sprouts, and even then I did not get any.

I took up the dictionary after supper, to calm my mind, and looked up "briar." Apparently they don't make pipes from the prickly kind, but from the root of a sort of heath, which makes the connection between tobacco and walking-sticks all the more mysterious. The word comes from the French *bruyère*, to my surprise. I had always thought it a kind of cheese.

Next week: **Brains Trust**



"He's on a sit-down strike."

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